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ON FILM

DAVID CONNELL, ACS

"The latitude of today's films is so fantastic that it records what my eye sees. We can create colors and textures and capture pictures in any light. We shot scenes for a 2002 Steven King miniseries, *Rose Red*, motivated by handheld flashlights with just a little ambient bounce and moonlight. Ghost stories are supposed to be scary, so I lit accordingly. We wanted the audience to feel the darkness, and still see what we wanted them to see. *The Monkey King*, a previous film is totally different. It's a fantasy with different looks in three different worlds. One is grungy with muted tones. Another is bright with jade colors and reflective surfaces. The third world feels warm and natural. You've got to be versatile to discover the right look each time because every movie is different. You have to capture the director's vision but you can't be afraid to take chances."

David Connell has compiled more than 40 feature and MOW credits since 1985, including the recent telefilms *Two for Texas*, *Moby Dick*, *Storm of the Century*, *Cleopatra*, *Don Quixote* and *The Monkey King*. He has received numerous awards during his career, and has recently completed shooting the Steven King miniseries *Rose Red*.

All these films were shot on Kodak motion picture film.

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Features

American Cinematographer

The International Journal of Film & Digital Production Techniques



On Our Cover:
Dr. Hannibal Lecter (Sir Anthony Hopkins) is muzzled — but only for the moment — in *Hannibal*, directed by Ridley Scott and photographed by John Mathieson, BSC (photo by Phil Bray, courtesy of MGM).

Contributing Writers:
Stephanie Argy
Richard Crudo, ASC
Bob Fisher
Graham Rae
Michael Singer

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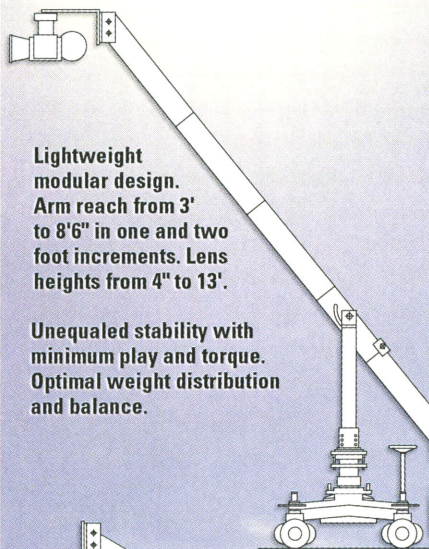


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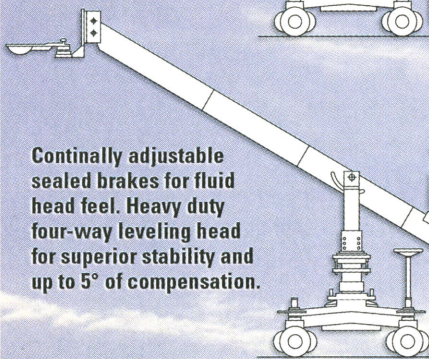
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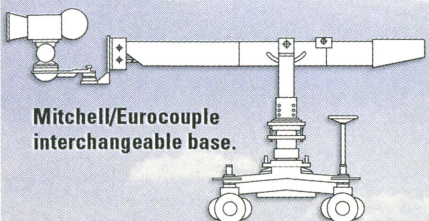


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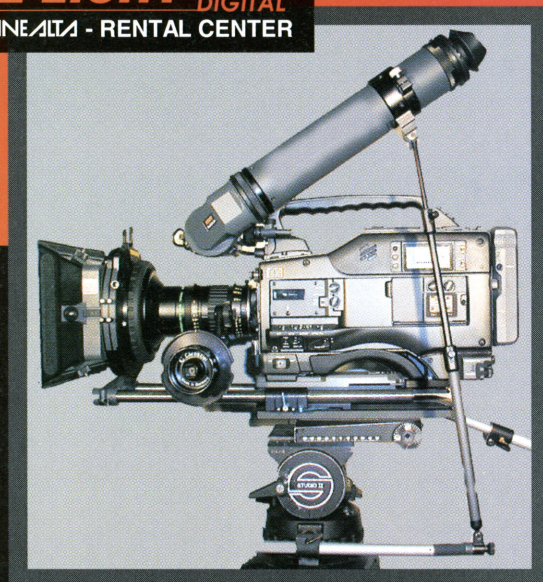
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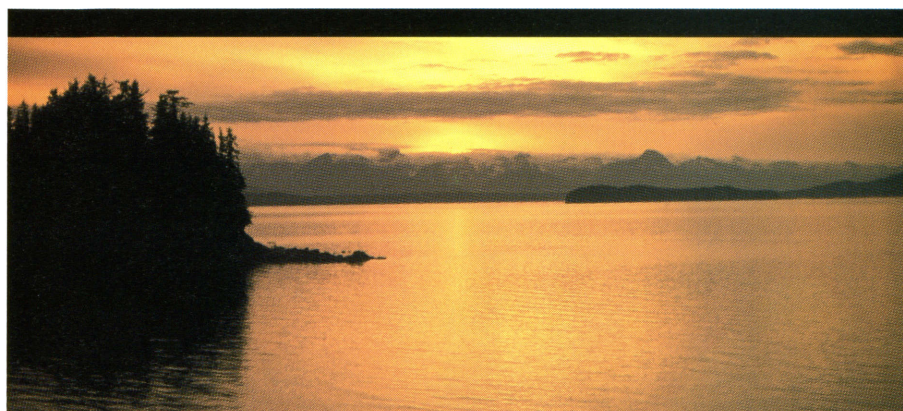
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Special effects are an increasingly important part of many theatrical releases, television programs and commercials. Audiences have even come to expect them.

Accordingly, growing numbers of post production houses are being called upon to transform ideas into "reality" through costly digital technology. Spending from \$10,000 to \$50,000 for a single scene is not uncommon.

Needless to say, many DPs, Directors and Producers have openly wished there were more things that could be done through the lens—and not in post.

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Changing the optical characteristics

of the Squishy Lens™ in real time is as simple as using a "joystick" similar to a video game. And you'll have total "What You See Is What You Get" control. As an added benefit, there is no discernable light loss through the Squishy Lens™.

There are a variety of interesting effects possible with the Squishy Lens™. One is to provide a volumetric "tunnel vision" effect. When using a wide angle lens opened up to T2.0, you can have a positionable, variable clear center area, with perimeter areas of saturated colors "smearing" with other colors—as well as the ability to have an adjustable "center" of sharp focus. The sharply defined edges in the central area will produce double image halos as they extend into the smearing zone, and as you stop down the lens the smearing is diminished and you can see objects

Clairmont's Unique Squishy Lens™



being stretched and pulled like "optical taffy." Using longer lenses will diminish the effects, and ultimately produce more of a diffusion, with images taking on a prismatic haze.

However, the old saying that "a picture is worth a thousand words" certainly holds true in this case, so we'll gladly send you a videotape demonstrating some of the many effects possible.

The more time you spend using Clairmont's Squishy Lens™, the more ways you'll find to achieve interesting special effects through the camera. It'll certainly challenge your creativity!



NOTE: The adjacent frame captures do not do the Squishy Lens true justice. It's important to see how motion and lighting changes affect the final image. You **MUST** see the sample video to appreciate the range of effects. Call for your demo VHS.



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It's also important to note that when comparing the effects possible with a Squishy Lens™ to what can be achieved on a CGI digital setup, depth and perspective are critical. Because film is essentially a two-dimensional carrier of information, creating complex aspect-related effects digitally can be quite time consuming and costly. Especially when you factor in the common problem of



varying interpretations. With the Squishy Lens™ you can see it before you shoot it! Obviously, the ability to do unique effects in camera during actual filming can save huge amounts of time and money.

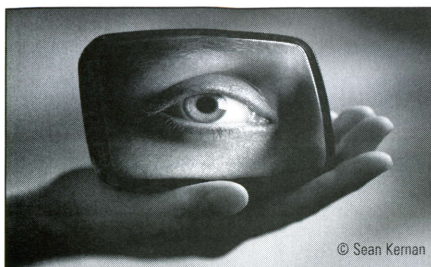
In the final analysis the Clairmont Squishy Lens™ will make DPs, Directors and Producers happy. A true "win win" situation for everyone involved. What more could you want?

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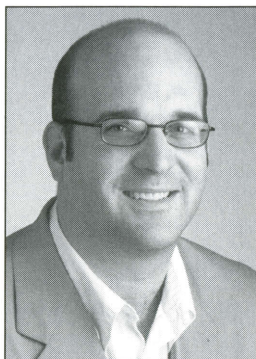
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Editor's Note



If someone were to carve a Mount Rushmore for cinematographers, the visage of Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC would surely adorn it. It would be impolitic to speculate about the other faces that might jut from such a monument, but Storaro has certainly earned his place among the art form's immortals.

The maestro's resumé reads like a veritable primer on motion-picture photography, and his mastery of the craft has earned him three Academy Awards (for *Apocalypse Now*, *Reds* and *The Last Emperor*), as well as a fourth nomination (*Dick Tracy*).

Along the way, Storaro has proven himself to be highly influential in both the aesthetic and technical sense. During the early days of his career, while hampered by the limited funds of the cash-poor Italian film industry, Storaro used creative brilliance to compensate for the lack of equipment and resources. He gradually developed sophisticated ideas about the psychological import of lighting and color, and he used both of these elements to add dramatic subtext to his imagery. Later, he pioneered the use of the ENR lab process, and paved the way for the widespread use of dimmer-controlled lighting systems on feature-film projects.

Perhaps the most obvious sign of Storaro's lofty stature is his reputation among fellow cinematographers, who regard him with a profound respect and even awe. In any room occupied by his peers, Storaro is a superstar, and the trail he's blazed has led the ASC to honor him this month with its Lifetime Achievement Award. In recognition of his unique artistry, *AC* has devoted half of this month's issue to the master's oeuvre, beginning with a comprehensive career overview ("Guiding Light," page 72). Our additional features include in-depth Q & A sessions on *The Conformist* ("Shadows of the Psyche," page 84) and *Apocalypse Now* ("A Clash of Two Cultures," page 94), as well as a look at some of the cutting-edge techniques that Storaro brought to his most recent project, an epic miniseries for the SciFi Channel ("A Novel Approach to *Dune*," page 104).

This month's other features focus on the tricky, trying and often grueling aspects of location shooting. Our coverage of the topic includes behind-the-scenes details from the sets of several fascinating projects, including *The House of Mirth* (Global Village, page 12), *In the Mood for Love* (Production Slate, page 22), *Hannibal* ("A Pound of Flesh," page 36), *Vertical Limit* ("Mountain High," page 40) and *Original Sin* ("Unbridled Passion," page 64).

Sincerely,

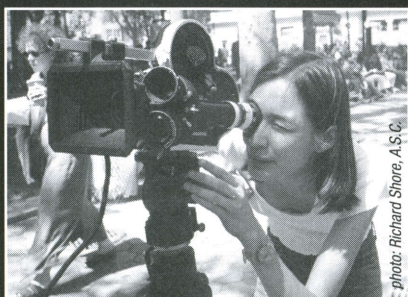
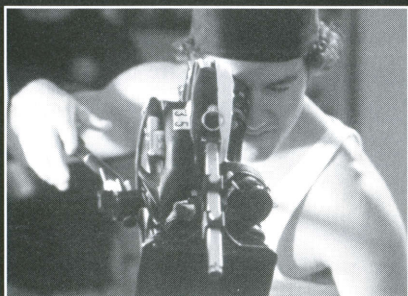
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Global Village

The House of Mirth Navigates a Vicious Circle

by **Graham Rae**

Near right: New York socialite Lily Bart (Gillian Anderson) finds herself at the mercy of high society in *The House of Mirth*, an adaptation of Edith Wharton's classic novel. Below: Lily draws attention by attending the opera with a married man, Gus Trenor (Dan Aykroyd, left), and the single but suspect Sim Rosedale (Anthony LaPaglia).



It's tough at the top. Business and personal relationships can disintegrate at any moment, allegiances change at the drop of a hat, and nobody can quite be trusted. Praise from backstabbing associates is not unusual, and personal fortunes are built on shifting sands.

These are some of the harsh lessons learned by socialite Lily Bart

(Gillian Anderson) in *The House of Mirth*, a drama set in turn-of-the-century New York. In trying to conform to expectations and find a wealthy husband, Lily loses her chance for real love with Lawrence Selden (Eric Stoltz) and is falsely accused of having an affair with a married man. This accusation, coupled with her heavy gambling

debts, results in Lily being ostracized by her friends, family and the prestigious social circles to which she has become accustomed, with deadly results.

Based on a celebrated 1905 novel by Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth* is the latest project by renowned English director Terence Davies, whose credits include *The Neon Bible*, *The Long Day Closes* and *Distant Voices, Still Lives*. Armed with a \$7.5 million budget and a nine-week shooting schedule, Davies set out to find a location that could convincingly double for New York in the early 20th century. After scouring locations, including a few on the East Coast of North America, he finally settled on the Scottish city of Glasgow, which has become Britain's largest film-production center outside of London.

Davies enlisted cinematographer Remi Adefarasin, BSC to photograph the film. Adefarasin received an Academy Award nomination and won a BAFTA award and a Camerimage Golden Frog for his work on *Elizabeth* (see *AC* Dec. '98); he received additional BAFTA nominations for *Christabel* and *Memento Mori*. He was also the second-unit director of photography on desert sequences in *The English Patient*.

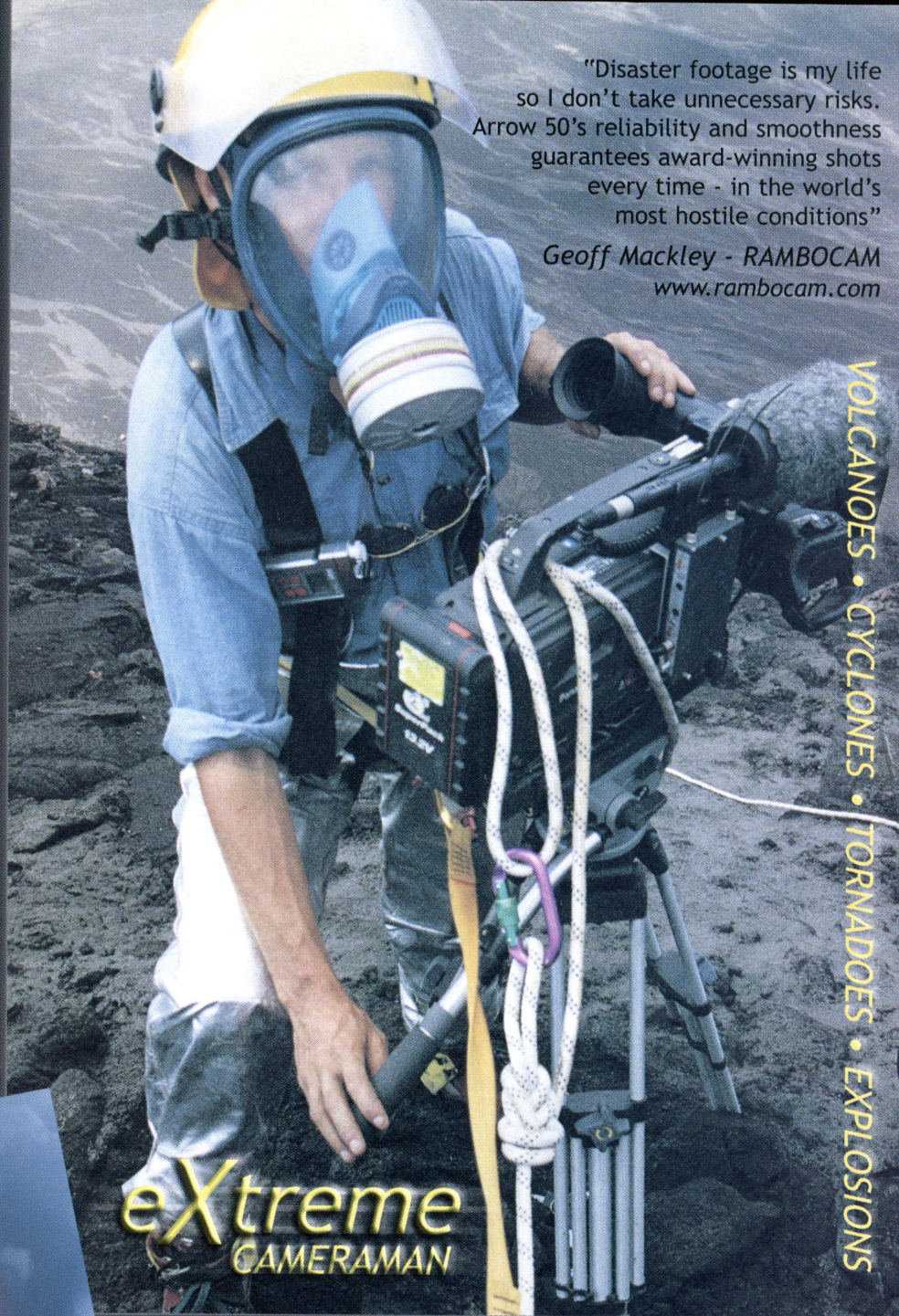
The House of Mirth is actually the second Wharton adaptation photographed by Adefarasin, who also shot the 1995 U.K. miniseries *The Buccaneers*. The cinematographer says he "loves the way [Wharton's] storylines reflect contemporary culture." He also appreciates Davies's directorial aesthetic. "I love his visual simplicity and his refusal to chop up scenes to make them appear more exciting," Adefarasin offers. "Fast cutting can be a ploy to trick viewers into thinking they're getting more content than they actually are. If the scene is well-staged, I prefer watching one sustained image rather than a barrage of cuts."

In determining a visual approach for the film, Adefarasin and Davies considered the paintings of Belle Epoque portraitist John Singer Sargent. "Those discussions were a shortcut to finding the way light falls on people, and how the backgrounds are just impressions

Photos by Jaap Buitendijk, courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics.

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Top: Lily steals the show at a high-society party when she brings a painting to life. Bottom: She waits in vain for a visit from her beloved Selden. "I never allowed light to fall directly on anyone's face," notes cinematographer Remi Adefarasin. "It had to be either bounced off a cream-painted beadboard or passed through one of my fabrics."

and not celebrated," says the cinematographer. He credits production designer Don Taylor with creating a depth of reality for *The House of Mirth* via his sets.

Adefarasin says that he and Davies had many good-natured arguments about the framing of shots. Davies favors "having the [character's] face slap-bang on the cross hairs," according to Adefarasin. "That's all very well for a tableau-type film, but Lily Bart was talking to other people, not to the camera. Shooting in the 2.40:1 ratio, I couldn't bear undynamic framing, and because I operated [the camera] on this film as well, I had to speak out. Next time I'll get a ground glass with an adjustable cross hair!"

Because he was operating, the cinematographer chose a camera with which he's totally familiar: the Arriflex 535B. He says he's a "great fan" of Arriflex equipment, and his team tested many lenses in order to assemble the right combination for the film. He eventually chose Hawk prime lenses and also employed an Angenieux zoom with an anamorphic attachment on the rear element. "The advantage was that we got very little distortion, but the drawback was that the maximum aperture was T4.8," he notes. Since close-ups are more flattering with longer lenses, Adefarasin emphasized the decline of Lily's health and happiness by using wider lenses placed closer to actress Anderson.

Adefarasin used Kodak's Vision 200T (5274) and Vision 500T (5279)

stocks on the production. "Terry [Davies] very much liked the look of the [Kodak] Premier print stock," he adds. "Deluxe [London] printed all of our dailies on Premier so I could ensure that I had enough fill light. I like moody, atmospheric images, but I didn't want to alienate audiences with a preponderance of unsatisfying somberness."

On each film he shoots, the cinematographer develops a specific lighting philosophy. "On this film, gaffer Jimmy Wilson and I never allowed a light to fall directly onto anyone's face," he details. "The light had to be either bounced off a cream-painted beadboard or passed through one of my fabrics."

Adefarasin has a reputation for using fabric to make lighting more dynamic and less mechanical, and he says his methodology has raised a few eyebrows. "I have a wide range of laces, silks and nets that I use in various combinations to get an interesting look. Many years ago I did a film set in a lingerie factory, and I came away with a roll of sexy knicker fabric. I do get some curious looks as I whip my fabric out. I'm working on the [HBO] World War II miniseries *Band of Brothers* right now, and the guys are actually pretty cool about my fetish," he deadpans. "I also use fabric on the floor to bounce backlight into the room. Lighting a set is instinctive for me — I have to know the emotion of a scene and where the action happens, then I have to decide whether to light in sympathy with

the scene or against it."

Although Adefarasin says he is fairly purist about light sources, he is not above cheating to get the desired effect. That's just as well, because *The House of Mirth* contains numerous sunny scenes, and Glasgow is not exactly known for its high temperatures or sunny disposition. Scenes featuring sunny exteriors were either lit or overexposed to simulate brightness. Interiors were mostly filmed in existing buildings, which were often unheated.

The House of Mirth features some subtle CGI work, including a nighttime scene featuring a crowd watching a fireworks display over the water. The fireworks and the bay were added in post and were blended with a crane shot taken on location in Scotland. Adefarasin notes that the film's small budget didn't allow for many crane shots, so the film features just three.

The production's low budget was a major headache, he emphasizes. For example, scenes set in a railway station were actually filmed in a museum, and the train was merely a cutout disguised with lots of smoke. "It seems that every film hasn't got enough cash, but *The House of Mirth* was a genuine hardship case," Adefarasin concludes. "The industry, Arriflex Media and Deluxe London bent over backwards to help make this film happen, and [producer] Olivia Stewart deserves an accolade for her perseverance." ■



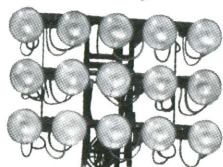
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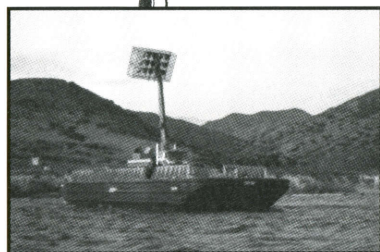


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DVD Playback

by Chris Pizzello

Seven

**2.40:1 (16 x 9 Enhanced)
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\$29.95**

A beautifully made film about the ugliest corners of the human psyche, David Fincher's *Seven* was one of the most unsettling films of the '90s. The story follows two detectives (Brad Pitt and Morgan Freeman) on the trail of a highly intelligent, seemingly invincible serial killer, John Doe (Kevin Spacey), who chooses victims based upon their indulgence in one of the Seven Deadly Sins. The film offers no false uplift or cheery resolution. Instead, the filmmakers side with the world-weary mindset of Freeman's Detective Somerset, who is all too aware of the impossibility of stemming the rampant evil that's loose in the film's carefully anonymous, rain-soaked urban hell.

Darius Khondji, ASC, AFC's rich, moody and justly celebrated cinematography exemplifies one of the film's major themes: the seductiveness of sin. The interesting visual arc moves from the near-total darkness of the first murder to a truly horrible conclusion in the clear, bright "magic hour" of early evening (at 7 p.m., of course). It's a tribute to Fincher's powers as a visual stylist that many viewers believe they've seen things that aren't really there. The film was excoriated by some critics for its violence, but there are no onscreen acts of brutality — only the aftermath is shown, in a grim, remorseless tone. In his commentary, Fincher recalls getting into an argument with a woman who berated him for displaying the film's now-notorious final twist, when in fact this grisly revelation is never actually shown onscreen.

The argument that film schools are a luxury rather than a necessity in this age of special edition DVDs is given its most persuasive support yet by this spectacular new DVD edition of *Seven* from New Line. You could subtitle this disc *Fincher 101*, as the key aspects of the film's production — the stars, the story, the picture and the sound — are dissected in detail by a host of commentators on four separate audio commentaries. Of the most interest to *AC* readers, of course, is the chance to hear Khondji discuss his "color noir" strategy; meanwhile, Freeman laughingly admits (in a commentary that also features an enthusiastic Pitt) that he eventually grew impatient with Khondji's perfectionist, last-minute "tweaking" of the sets. Among the supplements included on a second disc are a thorough examination of the jagged, highly influential opening-title sequence, and a series of interesting deleted scenes.

The truly outstanding feature of this DVD is a newly remastered transfer of the film made directly from the film's original negative under Fincher's supervision. The results are stunning, with superb clarity, rich color saturation and deep blacks.

Gimme Shelter

**1.33:1, Dolby Digital 5.1, 2.0
and DTS 5.1**

Criterion Collection, \$39.95

"[The Altamont concert] is creating a microcosmic society which sets an example to the rest of America as to how one can behave in nice gatherings."

— Mick Jagger, prior to Altamont

Even in his most sardonic moments as a lyricist, Jagger could not have come up with a statement more

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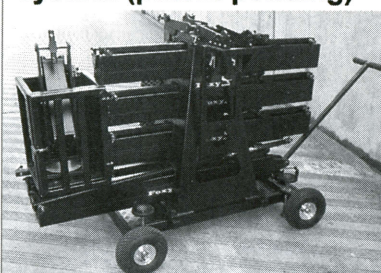
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ironic. When the highly respected documentarians Albert and David Maysles began following the Rolling Stones around the United States during the group's 1969 tour, they weren't sure of the theme they were after, and the first half of *Gimme Shelter* reflects this lack of an agenda: it's an entertaining, non-controversial glimpse of a rock band at the cocky, strutting height of its powers.

The Maysles brothers undoubtedly surmised that the Stones' free concert at Altamont Speedway near San Francisco would be the perfect close to the film — and it was, but not for the reasons they anticipated. When one of the Hell's Angels assigned to work as security fatally stabbed a gun-toting spectator, the documentary captured what many pop-culture pundits have singled out as the exact moment when the innocence of the '60s ended. *Gimme Shelter* virtually screams to be shown as the bumper half of a documentary double-bill with Michael Wadleigh's far more optimistic *Woodstock*.

In addition to an excellent new, high-definition transfer, remastered and restored from the original 16mm negative, Criterion has packaged *Gimme Shelter* with its usual unparalleled attention to detail. (Who else but Criterion would have the imagination to include audio excerpts from San Francisco radio station KSAN's post-mortem analysis of the concert, recorded on December 7, 1969?) Also included is a commentary from directors Albert Maysles and Charlotte Zwerin, as well as fellow collaborator Stanley Goldstein, who reveals that some Hell's Angels assaulted David Maysles after production and threatened all of the filmmakers with death warrants if the film ever saw the light of day.

Also included on the disc are never-before-seen performances of a quartet of Stones songs, along with some juicy backstage outtakes (including one featuring Ike and Tina Turner), an Altamont stills gallery featuring the thoughtful work of photographers Bill Owens and Beth Sunflower, and a useful restoration demonstration.

Touch of Evil

**1.85:1 (16 x 9 Enhanced),
Dolby Digital 2.0
Universal, \$29.98**

Orson Welles's deliciously pulpy study of ethical rot on the Mexican border remains a landmark in film style. Wearing both his director and actor caps, Welles virtually oozes corruption in his role as Hank Quinlan, a corpulent police chief who frames a Mexican youth as part of a criminal plot. Russell Metty, ASC's baroque cinematography is an essential component of the film's sleazy charm — the camera slides around characters like a garden snake and often tilts at Dutch angles to reflect a world increasingly divorced from its moral center.

Touch of Evil was notoriously sliced and diced by studio honchos who wanted a popcorn picture, and this DVD release sets the record straight once and for all. Producer Rick Schmidlin found a 58-page memo that Welles had written to studio head Ed Muhl, suggesting changes that should be made to Universal's cut of the film. Schmidlin then called upon respected sound and film editor Walter Murch to heed Welles's original instructions, and Murch effectively recut the picture to the director's original specifications. (Welles's memo is among the supplemental material on this disc.)

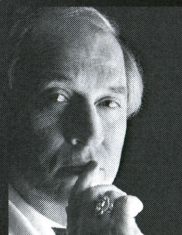
The chief alteration occurs during the film's celebrated opening sequence, which ranks as one of the most famous shots in movie history — a long, uninterrupted tracking shot around the Venice Boardwalk that smoothly sets the plot's wheels in motion. Per Welles's suggestion, Henry Mancini's music and the opening titles have been removed, and the mélange of incidental music filtering from nearby saloons has been reinstated.

This is a top-notch restoration of an important and vastly influential film. Grain is practically non-existent, and image blemishes, usually the most annoying distraction on older prints, are kept to a minimum. ■

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Production Slate



Infidelity in the Far East by Rachael K. Bosley

Neighbors Chow Mo-wan (Tony Leung Chiu-wai) and Su Li-zhen (Maggie Cheung Man-yuk) begin spending time together after they realize that their spouses are having an affair in Wong Kar-wai's *In the Mood for Love*.

Romance and its pitfalls form a theme that has been revisited frequently by Hong Kong filmmaker Wong Kar-wai, but audiences familiar with his work will find a slightly different treatment of the subject in his new film *In the Mood for Love*. Whereas the recent *Chungking Express* (1994), *Fallen Angels* (1995) and *Happy Together* (1997) seem powered by the sexy turbulence of youth and infatuation, *In the Mood for Love* finds its foot-

ing in the rocky terrain of marital infidelity. And just as the experimental, shot-on-the-fly feel of Wong's earlier films heightens the rawness of their characters, his new picture benefits from a lingering, surreptitious camera that underscores the significance of what remains unseen.

In the Mood for Love, which is scheduled for U.S. release this month, begins in 1962 in Hong Kong and follows two neighbors, Chow Mo-wan (Tony Leung Chiu-wai) and Su Li-zhen (Maggie Cheung Man-yuk), whose passing

acquaintance takes a significant turn when they realize that their respective spouses are having an affair. Trying to trace the trajectory of the affair, Mo-wan and Li-zhen begin spending time together; they assume the roles of the adulterers and enact conversations, flirtations and, ultimately, unhappy confrontations. Despite a determination that "we won't be like them," the equally lonely Mo-wan and Li-zhen come to enjoy each other's company and tentatively begin spending time together on different terms — terms unacceptable to

Photos by Wing Shya, courtesy of USA Films and Mark Li Ping-bin.

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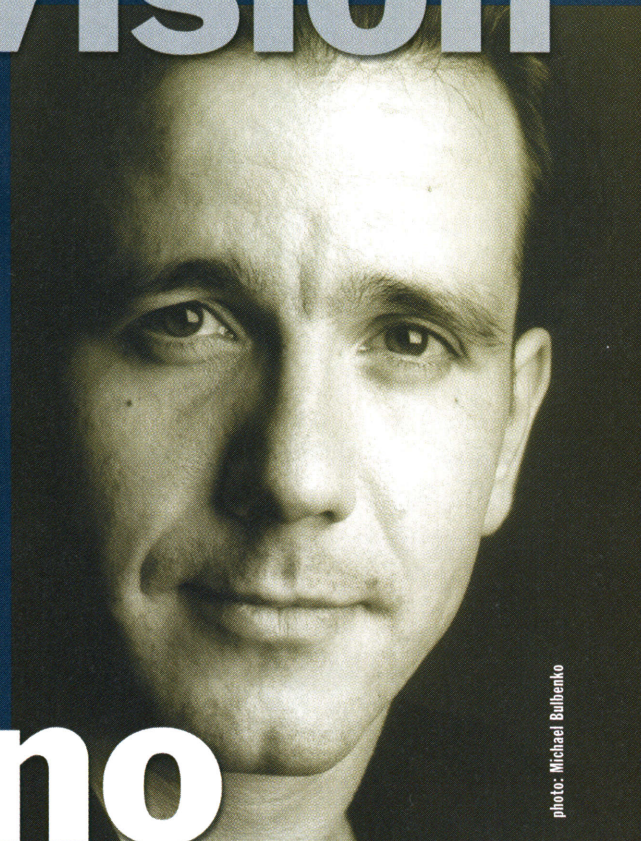
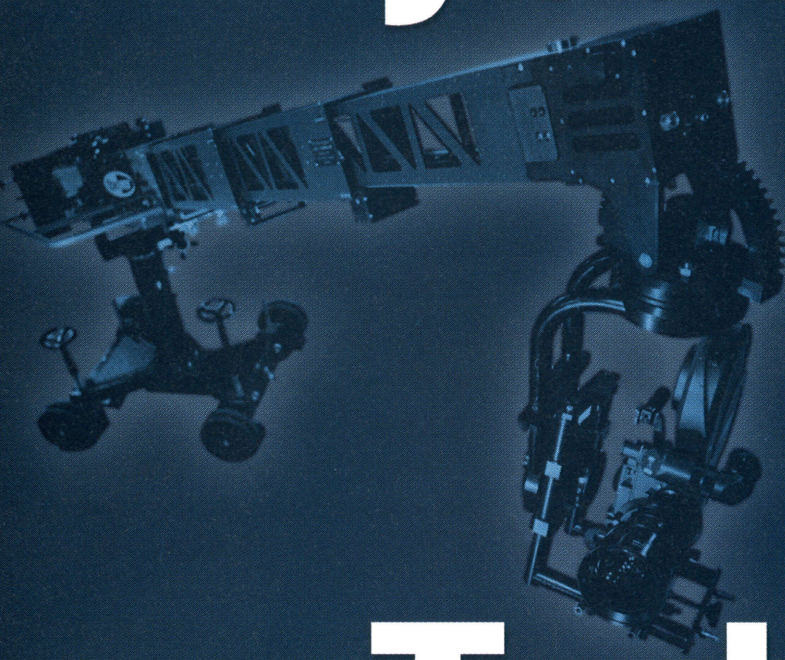


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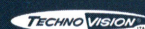
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Top: As their acquaintance deepens, Mo-wan and Li-zhen begin meeting in a nearby alleyway to avoid their neighbors' prying eyes. Below: Li-zhen waits for Mo-wan's floormates to leave so she can return to her apartment. The camera's location — in a closet and framed by hanging clothes — is both suggestive and practical, according to co-director of photography Christopher Doyle. "We wanted to imply more than we revealed," he says. "And the rooms were tiny!"

their society at that time. The story concludes in 1967, on the cusp of the Chinese Revolution.

Ironically, what is essentially a two-character film turned out to be one of Wong's lengthiest, most exhausting shoots — and he is known for prolonged shoots. The filmmaker readily admits that he finds screenwriting "boring," and he typically allows his stories to evolve as he films them; he simply sketches an outline of the story, finds locations and begins shooting (sometimes without the government's notorious permits). The unpredictability of the Asian economy has often complicated Wong's financing and scheduling; this was true of *In the Mood for Love*, which began shooting in early 1999 but lost its primary investor soon afterward. Production was called to a halt, and it resumed intermittently over the next several months — a schedule determined in no small part by the availability of Leung and Cheung, two of Hong Kong's busiest and most popular actors.

Wong finished the film just in time to get a print to the 2000 Cannes Film Festival last spring.

The judges at Cannes responded by awarding *In the Mood for Love* the Grand Prix de la Technique, an honor shared by production designer/editor William Chang Suk-ping and co-directors of photography Christopher Doyle, HKSC and Mark Li Ping-bin. The film has since earned both Doyle and Li a second Golden Horse, Taiwan's equivalent of the Oscar; Doyle took home the award in 1997 for *Happy Together*, and Li won it in 1993 for *The Puppetmaster*.

The Cannes citation seems particularly fitting in light of the fact that Chang and Doyle have been Wong's core creative team for more than a decade. Chang, who introduced Doyle to Wong after working with the cinematographer on other projects, has designed all of Wong's films, in addition to sometimes serving as editor and costume and makeup designer. *In the Mood for Love* is Doyle's sixth collaboration with the director. The Australian cinematographer, who has lived in Hong Kong for about 20 years, has won three Hong Kong Film Awards for his work with Wong, for *Days of Being Wild* (1991), *Ashes of Time* (1994) and *Fallen Angels*. (Doyle also won a Hong Kong Film Award in 1987 for Kei Shu's *Soul*.) "Working with Chris is like walking into a restaurant where he is the chef and I am the customer," Wong explains. "We are so used to each other that he will know what to cook for me."

According to Doyle and Wong, the visual strategy they develop with

Chang is explicitly related to the locations they select. "On most of the films I've done with Kar-wai and William, the lighting and colors emerge from an accumulation of elements, rather than an appropriated idea of what some would call a film's 'style,'" says Doyle. "The single most determinative element of our films is their locations. We look for a place that suggests a character, his or her *raison d'être*, where and whether the camera or the character will move, et cetera. Even the lenses we use grow laterally from what the place says to us.

"You see better on location because you are obliged to," he continues. "You make discoveries if you are open to them and look with the eyes of a stranger. Hong Kong filmmakers rarely have the luxury of a studio or set; even films set in other periods or in our own backyard are *de rigueur* 'location' films."

Most of *In the Mood for Love* was shot on location in Bangkok, largely because Hong Kong is changing so rapidly that the production had trouble finding buildings that suggested the 1960s. Some sequences were filmed in Hong Kong, and the film's coda was filmed at Angkor Wat in Cambodia. Doyle worked on the production for all but its final month, at which time he had to attend to other commitments.

As the film's final form began to emerge, Wong decided he needed additional scenes photographed in Bangkok and Hong Kong, and he asked Li to help him complete the project. The Taiwanese cinematographer, who worked his way up through the ranks at Taiwan Central





Vittorio, congratulations from all of us at ARRI.

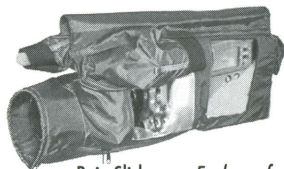
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Top: Mo-wan comforts Li-zhen when she breaks down while rehearsing a confrontation with her husband. Below: Doyle discusses an upcoming shot with director Wong Kar-wai.

Pictures, photographed 15-20 documentaries before making the transition to feature films in the mid-1980s. Now a resident of Southern California, Li works throughout Asia and is best known for his collaborations with director Hou Hsiao-Hsien. He had worked with Wong once before, as a second-unit camera operator on *Fallen Angels*. Noting that *In the Mood for Love* spans five years, Li explains, "Kar-wai encouraged me to use my own techniques rather than match Chris's, because he wanted slightly different looks for the different years." Li also shot the film's Cambodia finale, a grace note that Wong came up with at the last minute.

Doyle says that the "verticality of the protagonists' world" was a primary influence on the style of *In the Mood for Love*. "It's insinuated by the very narrow stairwell and entrance to their apartments, as well as the up/down relationship between their street and the outdoor noodle stand they descend to for their rendezvous." The filmmakers chose to underscore the confined nature of the characters' existence by framing the film in the 1.66:1 aspect ratio, and by frequently placing the camera where its

view is partially obscured: just behind a potted plant, at the corner of a building, and even under a bed or in a closet. "My previous movies are like watching CNN, when events unfold in front of the camera," says Wong. "But I approached this film as a Hitchcockian film — what happens outside the frame is what interests me. The camera is like the audience, playing the part of the observer."

A clever use of mirrors is just one way in which the filmmakers maximized their options while shooting in cramped locations, a challenge with which Wong's crew is quite familiar. "Necessity becomes the mother of invention," says Doyle. "The textures of a space, the confinement of four walls looking out on another wall, become a metaphor because all we can do is shoot into or across a wall." He adds that visual repetition — a recurring element in Wong's work — has a very practical cause as well. "We [sometimes] repeat a movement partly because that's the only small section of usable street that we got."

An example of this in *In the Mood for Love* is the alleyway where Li-zhen and Mo-wan have several nighttime meetings. The scenes were filmed on a small section of a street in Bangkok. "The eternal clamor of the streets of Bangkok energized the schedule, as we had to shoot as much dialogue as possible during a certain, very thin curtain of very relative quiet in the middle of the



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Co-director of photography Mark Li Ping-bin takes a break on location.

night," Doyle recalls. "We couldn't find or afford scaffolding or a tower, so we just let the shadows run long and mysteriously down a back street."

In addition to the logistics of a location, camera movement in Wong's films is heavily influenced by music, according to Doyle. "In all of our collaborations, the music informs the camera," he says. "Kar-wai will find a piece and say, 'Chris, listen, isn't this how Tony [Leung] moves when he's sad?' *In the Mood for Love* was informed by the mellifluous insistence and melancholy of the main theme [by Michael Galasso]." This was particularly true of the scenes in which Li-zhen and Mo-wan walk to the noodle stand below their apartment building to eat alone, before they get to know each other. "While shooting those scenes, Kar-wai would often replay the main theme between shots if he felt that I didn't quite get the pacing of the dolly and slight crane move," Doyle recalls.

The fact that *In the Mood for Love* unfolds as a kind of memory play also impacted the filmmakers' choices. "In *Days of Being Wild* [which was also set in 1960s Hong Kong], diffusion and the tobacco/green cast we gave to the image were our ways of filtering another period through the eyes of today," says Doyle. "With *In the Mood for Love*, we do it through the use of textures and film grain, the use of practical lighting

fixtures and with an extremely consistent lighting system and aperture [T2.5-T2.8] that organize the film in, of and around the incredible sensuality of William Chang's sets and costumes. Maybe shooting so much of '60s Hong Kong in '90s Bangkok gave us the bonus distance that an endeavor like this needs as well."

The production's camera package consisted of an Arriflex 535, an Arri BL-4 and an array of Zeiss prime lenses. The primary film stock was Kodak Vision 500T (5279), and Li also used Vision 800T (5289) for some of his sequences. Doyle used variations of a Warm or Black Tiffen ProMist filter ranging from 1/8 to 1 throughout the film, which he has done on all of his collaborations with Wong. Li did not employ an 85 filter for his daytime scenes, opting instead for Full Coral for exteriors and 1/2 Coral for interiors to warm skin tones.

Li notes that the three-day shoot in the remote temple city of Angkor was completed without electricity, and the series of tracking shots that glide through the temples was accomplished "with a dolly that wasn't in very good shape." The time period encompassed by *In the Mood for Love*, he adds, "is very close to me. When I saw what Chris had already photographed, I knew why they were looking for me. There were no easy scenes; everything related to style came from feelings in those locations." ➤

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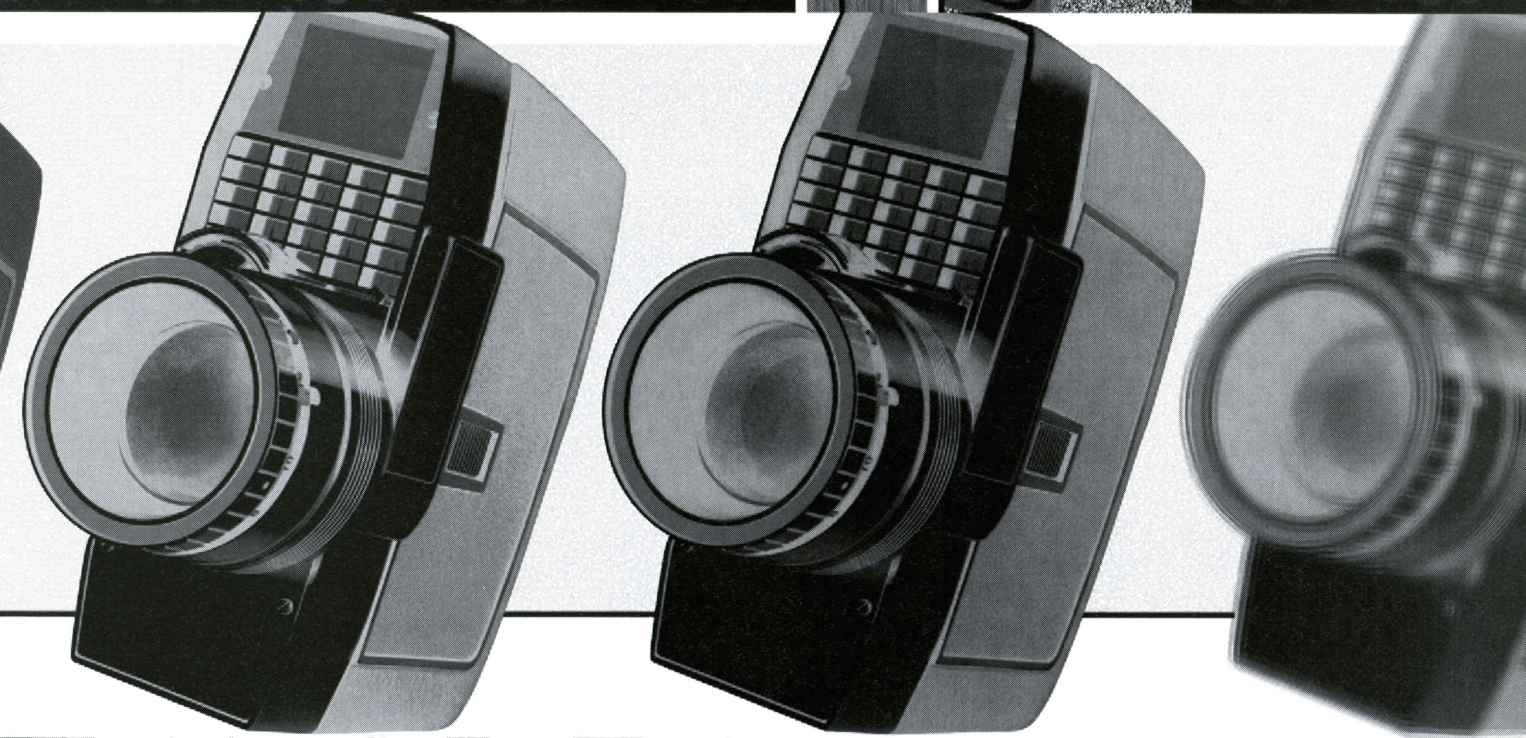
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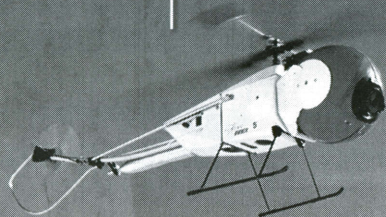
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At press time, Doyle had completed *Rabbit Proof Fence* for director Philip Noyce, and he and Noyce were busy prepping *The Quiet American* in Vietnam and Australia. Doyle was also waiting to resume production on Wong's *2046*, a science-fiction epic that they began shooting concurrently with *In the Mood for Love*, as well as readying his second feature as a writer/director (following *Away with Words*, which was screened at Cannes in 1999). Li's next film, Tran Anh-hung's *A la Verticale de l'été* (*Vertical Ray of the Sun*), which was shot on location in Vietnam, will be released this spring.

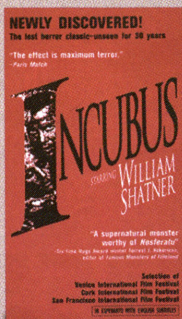
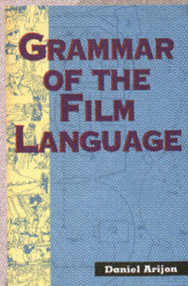
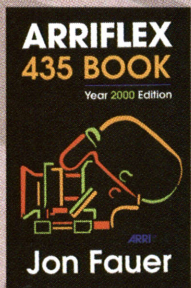
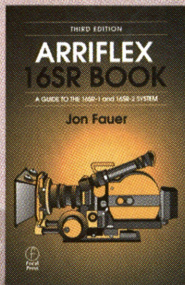
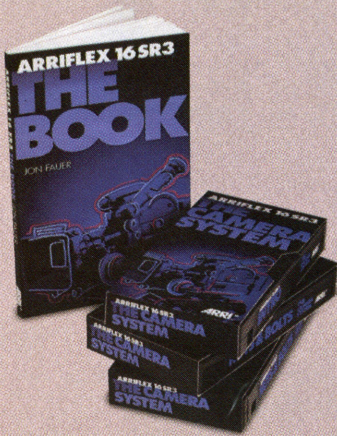
An Eye-Opening Experience

In the vertiginous opening and closing of the short film *Inferno*, the London Eye Ferris wheel remains stationary as the world revolves around it. The highly technical shot is part of the 20-minute science-fiction comedy that has been produced by graduating students at the National Film & Television School in Beaconsfield, England, as part of their post-graduate coursework.

Producer Teun Hilde reveals that *Inferno* is one of the most ambitious films yet produced at NFTS — partly because of the far-reaching script by writer Sharat Sardana (*Goodness Gracious Me*, *Small Potatoes*), and also because the film was pre-sold to Britain's Channel 4. In order to get the required night shot, Hilde persuaded London Eye operators to extend the running of the wheel for an hour into the evening after it was closed to the public. The roof of the Ministry of Defense building on the far bank of the Thames River was considered the optimum camera vantage point by the film's director, Paul Kousoulides. The MoD granted permission for access.

"The London Eye shot really forms the bookends to the film," explains Hilde. "Since the film is set in London in the near future and parodies science fiction, Paul had the idea to make this shot as a reference to 2001:

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A Space Odyssey, where the two space-ships dock to the sound of Strauss's 'Blue Danube.' It perfectly anchors the film in new millennium London."

Hilte says everyone the production contacted was inspired by the ambition of the movie, including the technical teams. "We needed to give the Eye a kick with some powerful lights," he notes, "and Paul mentioned that he had used Strand's 4K Super Quasars years ago in Wales. He had been impressed not only with the products and technical support, but also with the fact that they offered a week's training course."

Although these lights have long since been discontinued, Strand Lighting managing director Jim Ryan readily endorsed the project, and soon the company's newly appointed location lighting specialists, LCA, were pulled into the loop to provide current Strand lighting units.

LCA director Nick Shapley details, "Once we took the call from Strand about

the project, I visited the film school and met with the director, producer and cinematographer Melissa Byers.

"It became clear that the project was very ambitious, and it was felt that more light might be a better option than too little, as the products could always be dimmed or moved farther away from the subject. This proved to be a good choice since we produced enough power to backlight the London Eye so the shot would work."

That power was provided by the generator, which was supplied along with operators and distribution by the rental house Direct Lighting (who also contributed a 12K Par). Strand provided the other two 12/6K Pars through LCA.

Comments Hilte: "We were very impressed with Nick Shapley, who brought a wealth of knowledge and lighting experience, and we discussed the requirements thoroughly with our cinematographer. We initially opted for the 6K lights, but when we looked at the power options and calculated the

Photos by Roy Morris.

Pancake Lanterns (shown here with adjustable/removeable skirts)



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angle on the wheel, we decided to go for 12K lamps.

"We toyed with the idea of having the lighting on both sides of the wheel in Jubilee Gardens, but opted to cluster them together and flag them off so they wouldn't create too many hotspots on the wheel. As a result, we achieved an even rim of light that was very effective."

The production crew also managed to get a motion-control rig, with a precision computer-control head, from Motion Control Cameras. "The motion-control rig rotated the camera around the axis at exactly the speed of the London Eye — a single rotation every 28 minutes — so it will appear stationary in the frame while the world rotates around it. We've sped the shot up to around 15 seconds using time-lapse."

The movie's postproduction deadline is this month, when it is scheduled for its first screening at London's National Film Theatre. ■



In a dizzying shot inspired by the spaceship docking sequence in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the London Eye Ferris wheel remains stationary while the world spins around it in the short film *Inferno*. Lit with 12K Pars, the wheel was photographed using motion-control that rotated the camera around its axis at the same speed as the Eye: one rotation every 28 minutes. Opposite page: The filmmakers pose in front of the Eye with one of the Strand Pars.



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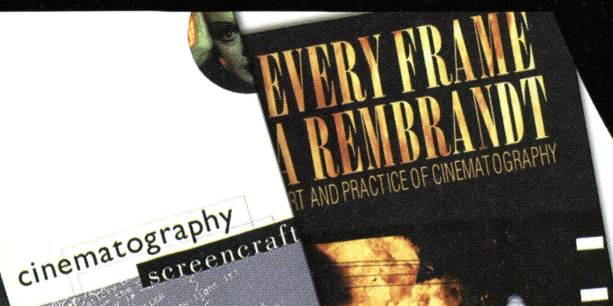
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A Pound of Flesh

Director Ridley Scott and cinematographer John Mathieson, BSC sink their teeth into *Hannibal*, a murderous tale of revenge by author Thomas Harris.

by Douglas Bankston

Unit photography by Phil Bray



It took 10 years for author Thomas Harris to pen the sequel to his bestseller *The Silence of the Lambs*, and when he completed *Hannibal* he immediately sent a copy to producer Dino De Laurentiis. The producer had passed on making *The Silence of the Lambs* after his 1986 film *Manhunter*, which was based on Harris's *Red Dragon*,

which had fared poorly at the box office. *Manhunter* was directed by Michael Mann and introduced film audiences to Dr. Hannibal "The Cannibal" Lecter, who was a peripheral character. (See Wrap Shot on page 136.)

Director Jonathan Demme's 1991 adaptation of *The Silence of the Lambs* was not only a critical and financial success, but also went on to

sweep the Academy Awards, thereby launching the careers of Demme, Sir Anthony Hopkins and Jodie Foster into the stratosphere. When he received the *Hannibal* manuscript, De Laurentiis vowed that he would not make the same mistake twice.

The producer read *Hannibal* while on location in Malta during production of *U-571*. When he

Photos courtesy of MGM Pictures, Inc.

received word that Demme was not interested in directing the sequel, De Laurentiis marched up the road to the *Gladiator* set and offered the project to Ridley Scott, who consumed the manuscript quickly and was instantly hooked. Scott segued from *Gladiator* (see *AC* May '00) directly to *Hannibal* without so much as a short vacation, and he tapped *Gladiator* cinematographer John Mathieson, BSC to capture Harris's thriller on film. "We knew we'd do it sometime before *Gladiator* was even finished," Mathieson recalls. "Ridley didn't have any time off, but he kind of likes that."

Hannibal finds Hopkins reprising his chilling role as the cannibalistic serial killer, who had escaped to a tropical island at the end of *The Silence of the Lambs*; FBI Agent Clarice Starling is played by Julianne Moore, who stepped in when Jodie Foster's fee was deemed to be too high.

Hannibal chronicles the lives of several characters whose actions and self-centered aspirations make them appear as monstrous and depraved as Lecter himself. Several years after catching serial killer Jame "Buffalo Bill" Gumb, Agent Starling finds that her career has plateaued, thanks to sexist bureaucracy and Agent Paul Krendler (Ray Liotta), who felt that he should have been the one to nab Gumb and receive all the glory. Sharpshooter Starling, dubbed the "FBI's Killing Machine" by one tabloid, has soullessly thrown herself deeper into her work, racking up a hefty body count in the process.

Meanwhile, the wealthy, perverted Mason Verger (Gary Oldman), who is missing lips, eyelids and most facial features thanks to a long-ago encounter with Lecter, lives only with the aid of a respirator. Verger lies bedridden in his mansion and uses his fortune to plot an elaborate revenge against Lecter — specifically, he wants to



watch the doctor being eaten alive by voracious wild pigs.

Overseas in Florence, Italy, Lecter is living a life of luxury on the lam by posing as a scholarly museum curator. But Italy's chief investigator, Rinaldo Pazzi (Giancarlo Giannini), who is trying to recover from the past disgrace of a botched investigation, is hot on Lecter's trail. Though catching the notorious killer would save his name, Pazzi decides to collect Verger's substantial reward for Lecter's capture.

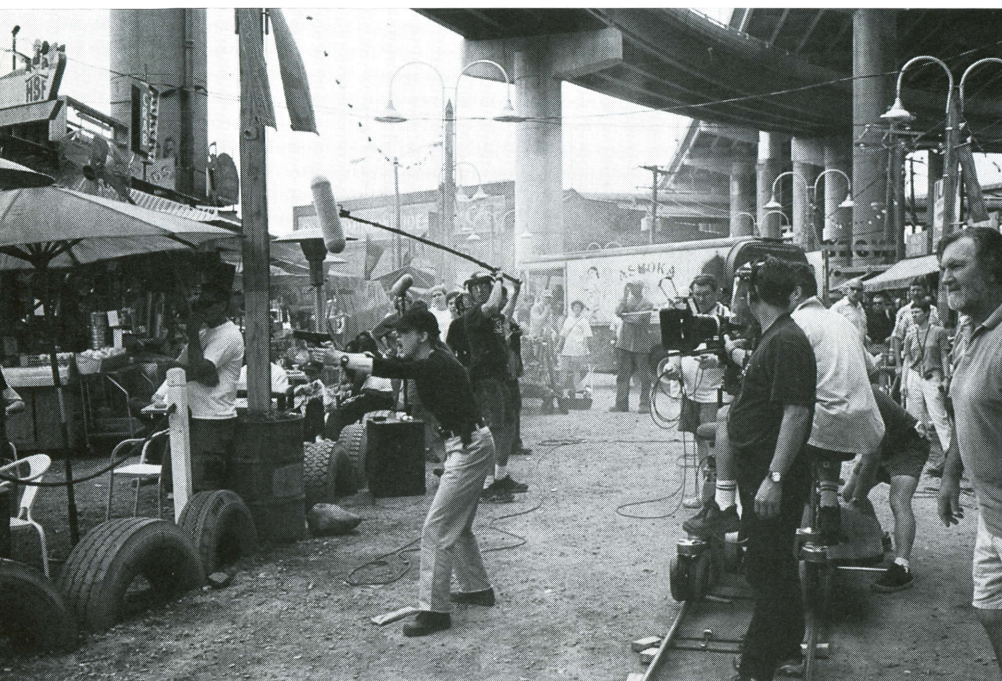
While in Los Angeles shooting the drama *K-PAX*, Mathieson dropped by the ASC Clubhouse to help unravel the intricacies of *Hannibal*'s production over a pleasant, un-Lecter-like Italian dinner.

One of the first points Mathieson made was that the decade-old style of *The Silence of the Lambs* did not factor into the filmmakers' approach to its sequel. "We disregarded it, to be honest, and just did our own thing," says the cinematographer. "It's a fantastically chilling film, but it feels dated. Maybe it's the techniques — the directing, the editing, the camerawork — [but] it's far more deliberate and almost naïve in places. That doesn't take away from its power, but there are filmmaking procedures in it that people wouldn't do now. In this age of MTV, you just suggest a couple of things with a few chaotic frames, and people know what you're talking about."



Opposite page: Dr. Hannibal "The Cannibal" Lecter (Anthony Hopkins) finally has Clarice Starling (Julianne Moore) right where he wants her. This page, top: Moving through thin strips of light created by 20K HMIs, Lecter glides up behind greedy Florence chief investigator Rinaldo Pazzi (Giancarlo Giannini), who is plotting the doctor's capture. Bottom: Cinematographer John Mathieson takes a light reading as Moore prepares to do battle in a fish market.

A Pound of Flesh



Above: At a Virginia fish market, the crew dollies behind Moore during an FBI stakeout that turns into a wild shootout (below). Long tracking shots were used extensively throughout the film.

Though the filmmakers had just shot *Gladiator* in Super 35, they opted for standard 1.85:1 for *Hannibal*. “The film didn’t have the size of *Gladiator* and therefore didn’t have the ease of lighting a big room using one large source,” Mathieson explains between bites. “The film has a lot of dull locations, such as little rooms with people tapping away on computers or on telephones. It’s a little more fidgety, and let’s face it: that kind of thing can be quite boring to shoot.

“Editor Pietro Scalia and I had originally wanted to shoot in the

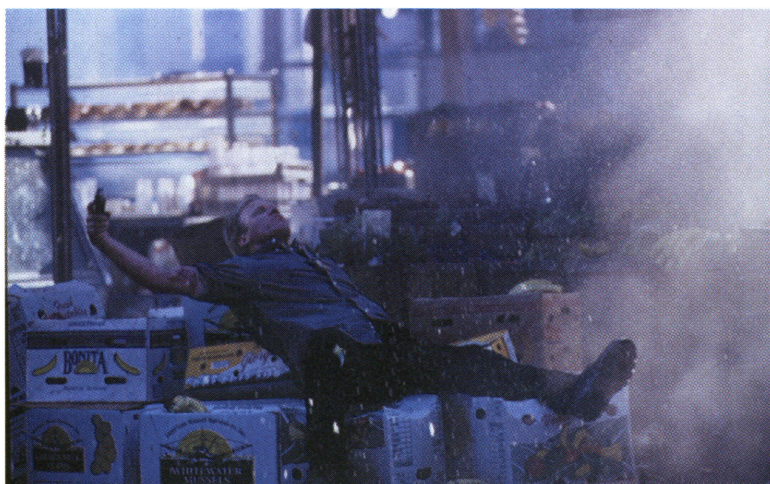
1.85:1 aspect ratio on *Gladiator*, but it wasn’t right for that film. Ridley was unconvinced about how *Hannibal* would look [in that ratio], but I think he liked it because it is a more intimate format that gives you more top and bottom, which is especially important in the Florence sequences. There were a lot of long tracking shots in this film, and we used a lot of wide lenses. It was quite surprising to see Ridley use wide lenses and get more and more wide on us; that’s unusual for him.”

Another key aspect of *Hannibal*’s visual style was that

except for two sequences, the film was shot entirely on location in Florence and Virginia. In most places, the production team was not allowed to set up any complex lighting rigs, disturb surroundings, or even fully redress interiors. “I tried to follow whatever element the characters happened to be in,” says Mathieson. “It was difficult to light because it was impractical. We were in little places where everyone gets on top of everyone else. You’ve got to move here, go there and light this, but we couldn’t do certain things because we were filming in someone’s house — it was quite frustrating.”

Hannibal is essentially a character-driven film, and its intense psychological mood had to be created through lighting — namely, the appropriate placement of highlight and shadow that the filmmakers would compare to the paintings of William Blake, which reveal the form of objects but not the detail. In addition to creating mood, shadows also helped to hide limitations either in dress or in light placement. “That’s what I like: bright things and black things,” the cinematographer affirms. “Dino [De Laurentiis] didn’t always like what I was up to, but I suppose Ridley protected me.

“Florence has narrow buildings with old, faded but glorious interiors, where the sunlight barely penetrates,” he continues. “That was a dilemma. It would be nice to see everything in these wonderful palaces, but you don’t really want to. It’s almost criminal for us to go in and say, ‘This room has a nice atmosphere throughout, but we can’t let the audience see all of the room.’ You have to work at keeping the drama and a sense of distance in small rooms because they feel small; you have to keep the light controlled, or it will bounce everywhere. I didn’t want to overlight those rooms, but I still wanted the sources coming through the windows. To keep that



feeling, I used fast stocks and fast lenses. I pulled back as much as possible and used the edges of objects to separate things.

"In America," he continues, "we were stuck with those interiors, and because they weren't our sets I was thinking, 'Oh my God, I don't want to see any of this. How do we make this a bit more exciting?' I tried to make it moody, but not 'scary' moody. That portion of the film has a colder, grayer palette and a lot more contrast to create a dirtier, more miserable look." Mathieson adds that shooting in Virginia during the summer made achieving the "miserable" American look complicated; the Virginia winter offers the bare trees and gray skies the production needed, but it was impossible to schedule the shoot accordingly.

Filmmaking techniques that reflect the medium's progress since *The Silence of the Lambs* are evident in a ghastly flashback sequence in *Hannibal*, which occurs while the disfigured Verger describes his last psychiatric session with Lecter. The good doctor doses Verger with an Angel Dust cocktail and suggests that he cut off his own face and feed it to his pet dogs. The high-flying Verger happily obliges.

An Arriflex 435 was used for this sequence because of its shutter accessibility. Mathieson went so far as to disconnect the camera's shutter and use his own shutter in front to create a flickering, strobe-like quality at manic speeds such as 3 fps, and when the camera conducts a push-in on Verger's face, the image streaks. "Using the 435 with Swing-and-Tilt lenses gave the images a soft, old feel," the cinematographer says. "We used all kinds of tricks to get nightmarish flashes rather than sequences of things. We also shot on Video 8, which we rephotographed onto film to give it a home-movie, porno feel."

On the rest of the film, multiple cameras from Joe Dunton Cameras were used whenever possi-



ble, with the two primary workhorses being a Moviecam Compact and an Arriflex 535B. Arri IIIIs were added for action sequences that required extensive coverage. "Many times we'd use the second camera to set up the second shot so we could leapfrog along," Mathieson notes. "It wasn't a big, multi-camera film because a lot of the plot involves sleuth work, tapping away on the Internet and investigation. In Florence, the two units could fit in a couple of small vans, which we'd drive to locations. We even rode bicycles, and we'd stop along the way for

an ice cream!"

The cinematographer employed an eclectic array of lenses, including fast zooms, Cooke S4s and T2.2 Zeiss Variable Primes. No filters were used, yet each lens had its own, subtle nuances. An Angenieux 10:1 T3.5 zoom and a new Hawk 3:1 150-450mm T2.8 zoom were used, as well as an old Cinespeed 10:1 28-280mm modified by Dunton. "The Cinespeed had a large element on the front that opens up to a T2.5, and it had a great look to it — that look might be a bit woolly for some people, but the lens was very fast and

Above: In Starling's basement office, a set that had to be thrown together due to an unexpected schedule change, FBI Agent Paul Krendler (Ray Liotta) examines her findings for possible leads in an effort to track down Lecter, who's hiding under an assumed identity. Below: Lecter, a man with unusual tastes, gets kinky with the wheel of Starling's car.



Despite his new, more refined surroundings, Lecter still projects an unsettling aura of menace.



slightly longer than the Angenieux,” Mathieson notes. “It was good in low light and better on the long end than the wide end.

“We used zooms a lot while shooting with two cameras, since we needed one lens to be much longer than the other to get different framing. The slower Angenieux was a better lens, but it didn’t have the others’ amazing speed. The Variable Primes were good, and Ridley liked those. They were on the A camera, and zooms were on the B camera.”

Because of the location difficulties, Mathieson selected fast film stocks that he rated normally. Kodak Vision 500T 5279 was used for all night exteriors and interiors and some difficult day interiors. Vision 250D 5246 was used for daylight exteriors and interiors in Virginia. In elegant and sunny Florence, where production began, EXR 50D 5245 was used for interior work; Mathieson occasionally pushed it when necessary. Technicolor in Los Angeles handled the processing.

“The windows are always

shuttered in those rooms in Italy,” Mathieson recollects. “I’d open them quite a bit to let this lovely light come in, and Ridley would close them so there would be only these 3- and 6-inch-wide strips of light coming into a room. There we were, in this beautiful palace, and we had six windows with only three inches of light coming through each one! But it gave the room shape. There were a few items placed in the way — for example, a white bust that we dragged in front of the window, so there would at least be a focal point on which the light could land.”

Employing a strategy he had used on *Gladiator*, Mathieson floated Leelium balloons in both interiors and exteriors in Florence because of their portability and minimal intrusion. “They have good shape; they’re easy to use, they don’t use much power and they don’t set fire to things,” he attests. “You can change quickly between HMI and tungsten lights, and they are dimmable. A lot of the palaces have very high ceilings, so we could tuck balloons up there.

A Pound of Flesh

“That’s how I turned Lecter into two characters: playing with warm and white light on his face. I would light the top of his head with a soft, yellow light and throw a brighter stripe down his face. Lecter is always so nice and polite. By using two sources, he almost looks as if he has two faces at once. Is he nice, or is he terrifying? The pallid, yellow light came from a dimmed HMI balloon, while the white 4000° Kelvin light was usually generated by 18K HMIs outside the windows, which I had warmed up to be closer to 3200°K.

“Anthony Hopkins has lines that run up either side of his forehead from his eyebrows,” he continues. “They look like devil lines, so I had fun picking those up at other times. I also tried to get a reflection off his eyes or his teeth — those very teeth he bites people with.”

The shoot in Florence presented Mathieson with the most difficult sequence of the production. Lecter, posing as a candidate for the museum curator position, gives a slideshow lecture to the Studiolo historians inside the Palazzo Vecchio. Investigator Pazzi attends the event in an attempt to set up Lecter’s capture. The lecture proves to have a prescient focus on the pre-Renaissance relationship between avarice and hanging, and once it comes to an end, Pazzi finds himself alone with his prey. But Lecter swiftly turns the tables and guts the investigator. He then hurls him off the balcony, leaving his eviscerated corpse dangling from a noose for all to see.

What made the sequence troublesome for Mathieson was that the interior and exterior portions were filmed in different locations. The Palazzo Vecchio interior was one of only two sets constructed for the picture (the other was Hannibal’s cell), and it was built inside a theatrical warehouse. The interior portion of the sequence had to be shot first, and a dramatic lighting change had



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A Pound of Flesh

Top: At the Verger estate, director Ridley Scott (right of camera) illustrates how the shot will play out while

Mathieson (far right) refreshes with a drink of water during the summer shoot. **Middle:** Starling abruptly ends faceless villain Mason Verger's vengeful scheme to feed Lecter to ravenous pigs.

The old barn, which featured a round, sunken feeding ring, was toplit from above by Arri's

Lumenaria-made Ruby 7 fixture, which was placed in a large tin lampshade. The light itself was a hot, white

tungsten quartz, but the brown wood, mud and pigs warmed the reflections. "The only thing in the air was the Ruby 7 in a big tin shade so you could look straight at it," says Mathieson.

"That light was nearly 2 1/2 to 3 stops over if you stood at the center. Two other lamps with 2K Blonde bulbs were placed in old ventilation ducts with a cage around them. Everything else was hit from the floor with a bounce."

Bottom: The "fierce" wild pigs were actually very well-mannered, so a snarling animatronic boar's head was used for the scene's voracious close-ups.



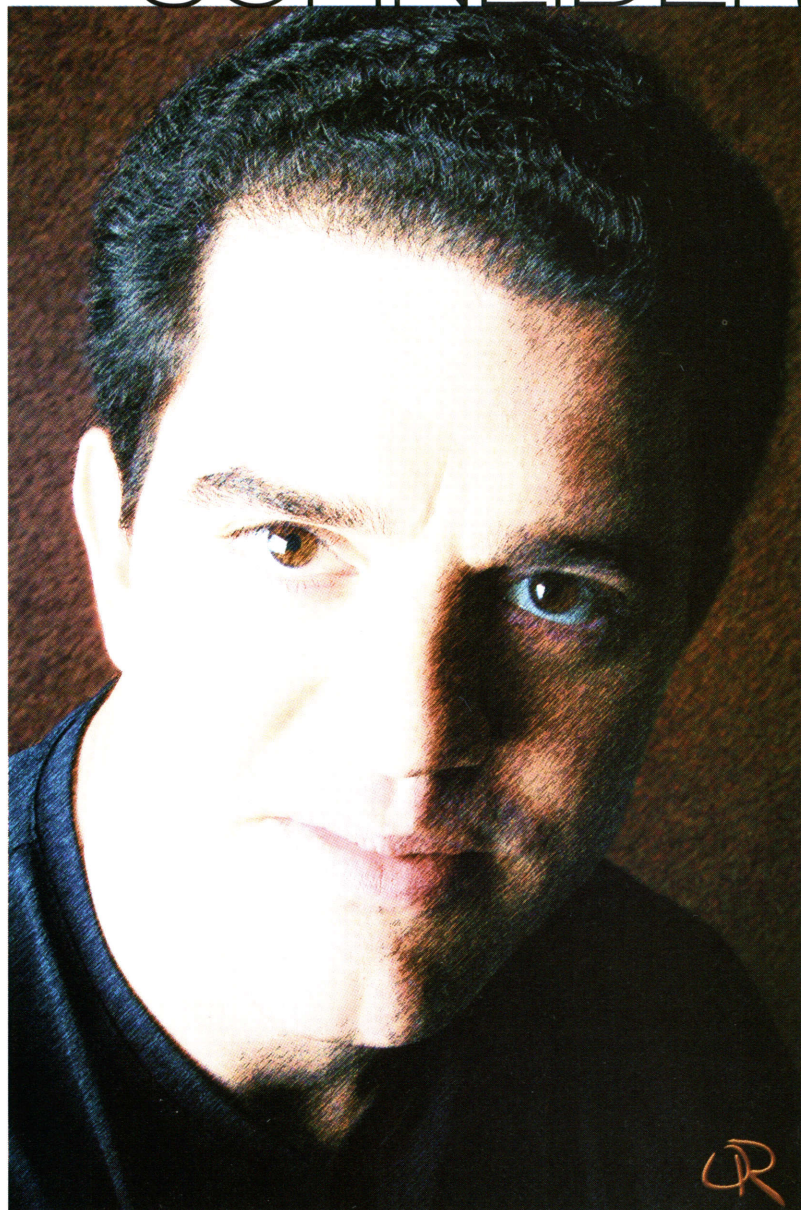
to take place when the lecture began. (See lighting diagram on page 47.)

"The thing with that room was that the spectators come in and have a 'fish and goose' soirée before Lecter starts his slideshow, so the lights have to dim down," Mathieson explains. "That's an immediate problem because you are starting with a room that is kind of lit, then you have to switch off the lights to go down to an ambient level where it feels dark enough for a slideshow, while still retaining the form of the room. And it wasn't a bright room to begin with."

"A lot of practicals made of clear, bare bulbs with a cast-iron leaf arrangement around them dotted the arches, and those gave better highlights," he details. "We used a lot of polys [polystyrene] in the ceiling and bounced 1Ks into them, because we were doing very wide shots where we could always see the columns and the ceiling. Sometimes the polys had to be removed and a ceiling piece dropped back in place. There's a central aisle and two smaller aisles to either side. Depending on which side of the room we were on while looking across the aisles, we would switch off the lights around the camera or perhaps have a slight glow, and we'd light up the far aisle to lend the room some ambience. There were a lot of dimmers. We were trying to light from outside a little bit, but not like daytime. We aimed 20Ks through the windows, but the apertures were very small, so the light only landed on certain small areas."

"When the slideshow begins, the practicals switch off to provide a visual reference that the lights have been turned off. The lighting change made this more difficult, because everything had to be lit by the projector. The Italians brought a big, Austrian-made, 2500-watt HMI projector by Parni, the followspot people. It was something I was quite familiar with from doing a lot of rock 'n' roll projects. It had to be bright enough to outshine whatever else

AARON SCHNEIDER, ASC



Digital photo by Owen Roizman, ASC, using the Kodak DC-4800.

FADE UP TO: "Based on a true story"
(Woody Allen font)

INT. IOWA STATE DORM ROOM (1985) -
I'M PRETTY SURE IT WAS NIGHT

AARON SCHNEIDER, a mechanical engineering student, thumbs through the pages of AMERICAN CINEMATOGRAPHER MAGAZINE. Bad 80's music ECHOES in the halls as he pauses suddenly, taking wide-eyed notice of a particular page.

AARON'S POV: The 1985 ASC MEMBERSHIP ROSTER. Dozens of the world's best.

AARON
(quietly, to himself)
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MONTAGE: Aaron quits engineering. Transfers to USC's film school. Meets many of the worlds greatest cinematographers in guest lectures. Studies hard (but not too hard.) Reads AMERICAN CINEMATOGRAPHER religiously.

CUT TO:

EXT. - FILM SET (1999) - SUNNY DAY

AARON - Perched high atop a camera crane. The A.D. calls for "the roll." The 2nd ASSISTANT slides the slate in front of the camera. Aaron rests his eye on the eyepiece. Thinks back. Smiles gratefully.

AARON'S POV (THRU GROUND GLASS):
The slate reads, "Aaron Schneider, ASC"

AARON
(quietly, to himself)
Wow.....cool.

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Right: Lecter decides to hang Pazzi from a balcony at the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, Italy, but not before slitting his abdomen with a Harpy knife. Below right: Pazzi lets it all hang out.



was in the room, because if you start lighting around a screen with an image on it, it starts to milk out. There is a coldness to the projection, and since the room is tungsten, we corrected only a tiny bit with $\frac{1}{8}$ CTO. I put some additional HMI bounce on the people in the foreground watching the slideshow [to suggest light reflecting from the screen], using a piece of poly and a 1.2K HMI that was scrimmed down."

Two additional 1.2K HMIs were used on either side just out of frame to throw light onto the audience members who were farther back. Those lights were also gelled with $\frac{1}{8}$ CTO. "As Lecter changes slides, the boys on the crew had to stand there with flags [to mimic the projector's lighting shifts]. Of course, that was a recipe for disaster," he says with a chuckle. "I used two 4-bank 4-foot daylight Kino Flos on some close-up work, but I didn't click them on and off, because there were long periods when only one slide was up."

Throughout that scene,

Hopkins worked a smaller prop projector that sat atop the larger projector. To cast light onto Lecter from the vents, one domestic daylight-blue bulb and a few stick-up lights no bigger than packs of cigarettes were placed around the projector.

A few close-ups were shot from the outside looking in as Lecter prepares to toss Pazzi off the balcony. The rest of the event was to be shot at the actual location. "I was trying to guess what we were going to do two weeks later," Mathieson admits. "It was like shooting a close-up, then a wide shot. Normally one would do the outside first and work in. I was using some 2Ks and 5Ks on the floor through the wrought-iron work of the balcony. I still had to make gobos for my lights to project the bar pattern onto Anthony's face."

Because those shots were filmed first, Mathieson notes, "there are a few minor continuity fluctuations" in the lighting, but he adds, "I think [the audience] won't notice

A Pound of Flesh

because they'll be so involved with what's going on in the scene."

The matching nighttime location work outside the Palazzo Vecchio required extensive lighting setups. The Palazzo's orange sodium-vapor lighting had to be switched off because it was the wrong color, and Mathieson's crew had to light the palace from scratch with 5Ks and 10Ks raking up the walls to simulate floodlights. "We tried to give it some kind of design by scooping the lights and shaping them to make it look like part of the installation," he details. Nine-lights and 10Ks were positioned farther back to illuminate the upper portion of the palace façade. The Palazzo's tower was lit with Full CTO-corrected 6K Pars placed on the other side of the square. Dinos placed on lifts simulated moonlight. To light the street, the art department constructed about a dozen large enamel dishes with naked 2K tungsten bulbs that were hung on hooks jutting from the walls of buildings. Five years ago, the city had removed the original light fixtures but left the hooks in place. Placed wherever needed, the bright 2Ks were designed to draw a viewer's attention away from highlights on the cobblestone streets caused by the Dinos. (For an idea of the sizable area that required lighting, see the



For this sequence, which was filmed in two nights, chief investigator Pazzi has enlisted the services of a gypsy pickpocket named Gnocco to deliberately botch an attempt on Lecter in order to get a decent fingerprint. Lecter knows he is being followed, and in a game of cat-and-mouse, he works his way through covered buildings and into the piazza where Gnocco awaits. Lecter escapes, leaving Gnocco in a crumpled, bloody heap.

Lighting for exterior scenes in Florence was a laborious task. Narrow streets made the placement of large lighting units difficult, and director of photography John Mathieson felt that the city's orange sodium-vapor lighting was unfit for photography. After having the city shut off all exterior building lights, the crew re-lit the structures with 2Ks and 5Ks. To provide a sense of depth, other structures and streets were lit with Maxi-Brutes.

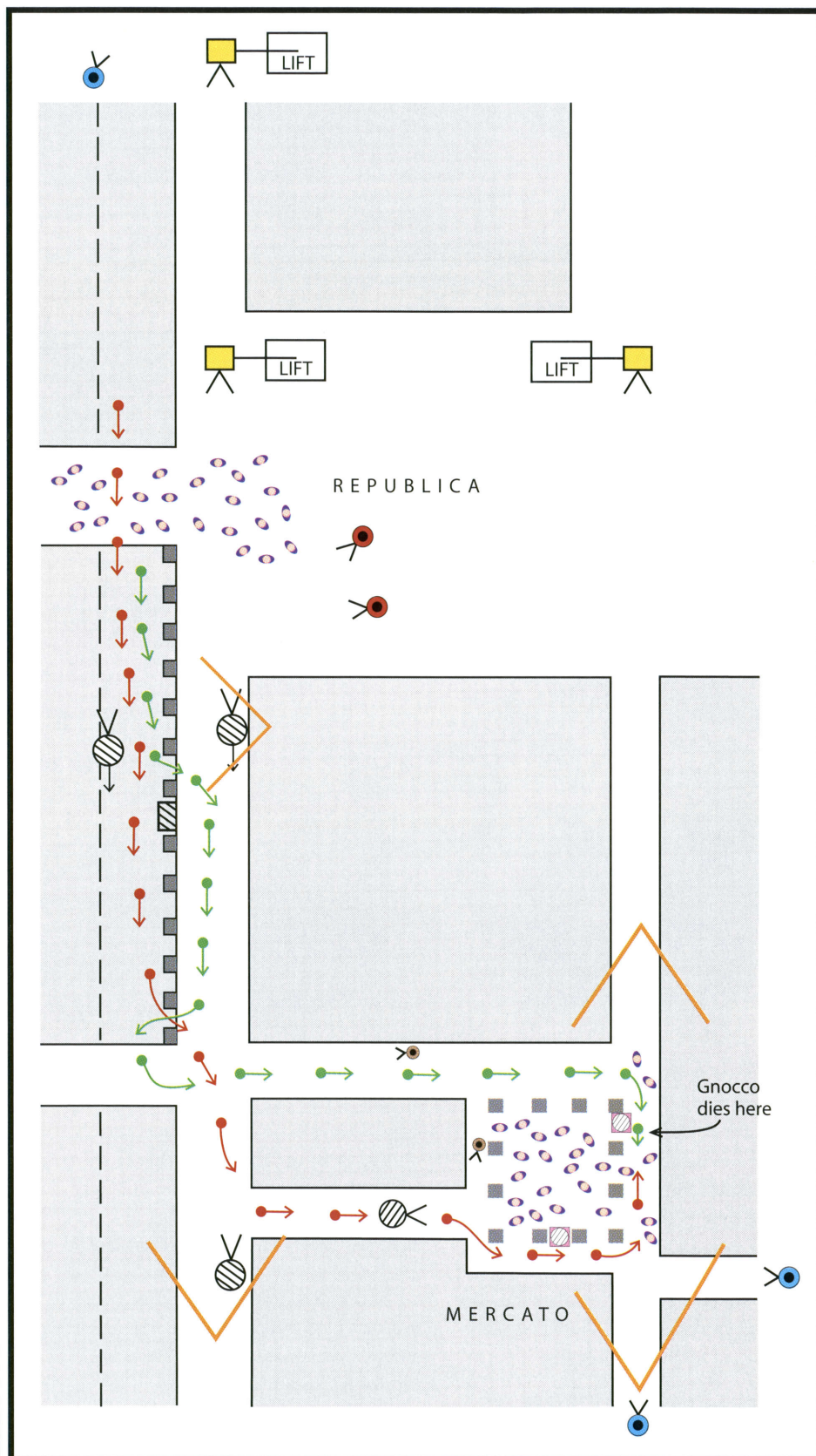
Dinos placed on lifts simulated the moonlight backlight and for fill, 8K tungsten balloons were strategically floated above the streets along the two characters' paths. Six 2K ceramic lamps were also mounted along the street and were repositioned as needed.

The sequence was covered with a mix of Steadicam and tracking dolly shots using a combination of long and wide lenses at an exposure of T2.8 1/3. For the scene's gory denouement, the close-ups were boosted with bouncelight from balloons using polys and supplemental 1Ks.

HANNIBAL

NIGHT 2
GNOCO KILLING

KEY			
	MAXI		DINO
	20K		GNOCO
	10K		HANNIBAL
	8KTUNGSTEN BALLOON		PEOPLE
	CAMERA COVERAGE		
	BOUNCE BOARD @ ground level w/BALLOONS just above		





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A Pound of Flesh

diagram on page 45.)

"As the camera moves around," Mathieson expounds, "I was switching lights off and playing with the separation. For Pazzi's drop from the balcony, he actually falls out of the light. We took the light off him and let it play through to Hannibal on the balcony. The Pazzi character was left in silhouette against the rough-hewn brickwork. We also had one camera underneath him, so as he fell down, you saw his guts spill out. A lot of it fell into the mattebox, [but] those shots didn't make the final edit!"

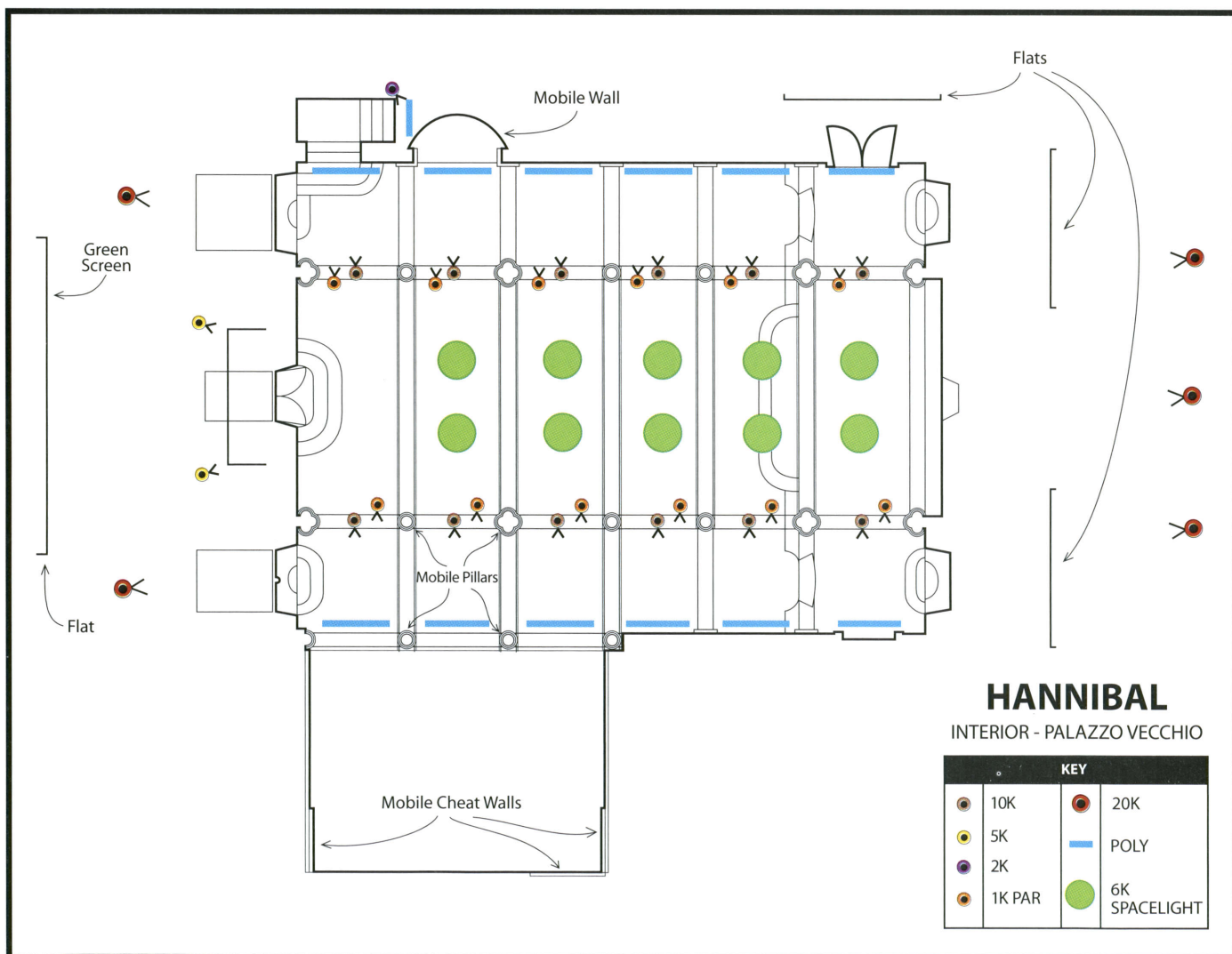
Next on the shooting schedule was a company move across the Atlantic Ocean to the United States. "It was so wonderful to be in Florence and so dreadful to go to Richmond, Virginia, for various reasons—the food, the light and the ice cream," Mathieson laments with a laugh.

Bad weather forced the first unit into its rainy-day alternate location—Starling's basement office—earlier than they had planned. The set was literally thrown together in a matter of hours, according to Mathieson. "The crew hung up a milkboard—opaque white Perspex—with bits of wire, and I put some Kino Flos behind it," the cameraman recalls. "We stuck odd pictures of murdered people and medieval stuff on it—the more obscure the better. Lester Dunton, who handled video playback, used his laser recorder/printer to print out pictures of Hannibal from various scenes, and we put those up. They held up really well with the 79 stock; they were the brightest things in the room, but the light dropped off fast, so I'd have to follow the actors around with a 3-by-3 poly bounce.

"On the desks were lots of old fluorescents, which added a bit of green/magenta because we didn't correct all of the tubes. I quite liked having that on Clarice's hands while she was opening envelopes; the light-



In the middle of Lecter's lecture sequence, the room went from being lit like the diagram above to being lit mainly by a large slide projector. To get an atmospheric look, the filmmakers employed an array of dimmer-controlled lights. Anthony Hopkins operated a 575-watt prop projector. Underneath was a larger followspot-type projector with a 2.5K HMI bulb. The projector light was supplemented by three 1.2K HMI units directed onto the audience members. A greenscreen lit by four diffused 1Ks was placed outside the balcony and rear windows so the exterior vista could be composited in postproduction.



A Pound of Flesh

"Guess who we're having for dinner?"
Lecter presents Starling with her immobilized FBI nemesis, Paul Krendler, during another scene that featured a mid-sequence lighting shift.



ing had a sallow, artificial, nasty basement feel about it. For lighting the side walls, I had sent for a cosmetic aqua-blue gel, but we found a blue bubble wrap that was the same color and we hung a large curtain of that. That provided an emerald-green look that was rather beautiful.

"We used a lot of bat-strips

with domestic bulbs. Many times we'd see the ceiling, so we had to put something on a back wall to give it some distance. We'd put a nice row of bulbs on a dimmer on the floor, and the light would just wash up and die away. There were always tables and chairs and clutter in the way to hide them. I don't think we used anything

bigger than a 1K in that room."

Near the end of *Hannibal*, Starling rescues Lecter from the pigs' feeding frenzy in a barn on Verger's estate, and she takes a bullet during the action. Lecter's captors are devoured by swine, and the doctor nurses Starling back to health with the dubious aid of psychotherapy drugs. He also treats her to an exotic dinner of brain fritters, and joining them at the dinner table is Starling's nemesis, a drugged but alert Krendler, who unwittingly supplies the fresh brain pieces while maintaining consciousness.

This scene also featured a major lighting shift. Mathieson explains, "The sequence starts out all candlelit and warm — an intimate dinner for two and a zombie. Starling is kind of drugged, and the scene unfolds from her point of view. When Lecter pops the top of Krendler's head off, I change the

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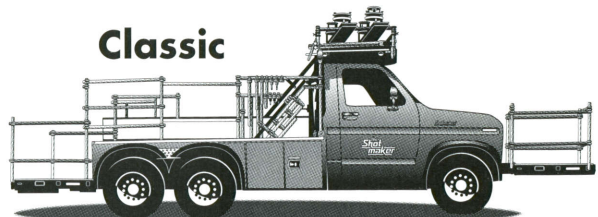
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lighting with dimmers. We take out all of the background, and when that happens, we are in close-ups, which makes the change less apparent. We lose all exterior and interior lights, and the only thing left on is a bright lamp over the table — a ring light of Photofloods wrapped up in some spun. It's skirted off so that the light lands just on the table and the characters have an overexposed, fearsome white topight, while the rest of the room disappears into darkness. You are descending into Hannibal's hell-hole, and Starling is focused on what's happening — suddenly she's with this complex, powerful, sinister guy and this other guy who's becoming a cabbage very quickly.

"It's a fantastic story about Lecter and Starling," Mathieson concludes. "It was a great film to be asked to do." For completing such a complicated shoot, Mathieson praises his fantastic crew: gaffer Bill



Lecter suggests a little champagne to go with the Krendler Surprise. The scene changed from warm candlelight to surrealistic, hot topight to enhance the horror Starling experiences.

O'Leary, key grip Mitch Lillian, A-camera/Steadicam operator Klemens Becker, 1st AC Simon Hume and B-camera operator David Dunlap.

Because the filmmakers didn't quite buy the ending of Harris's book — and felt audiences wouldn't either — the author helped Ridley Scott and screenwriter Steven Zaillian

conjure up a different ending for the film. In fact, Mathieson says, three endings were filmed: one for Scott, one for De Laurentiis and one for Harris. Mathieson gave AC a few hints as to which ending winds up on the screen, but why spoil that wonderful dinner? ■

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Mountain High

Director Martin Campbell and cinematographer David Tattersall, BSC confront some truly daunting logistics on *Vertical Limit*, a high-altitude action thriller shot in the New Zealand Alps.

by Ron Magid

Unit photography by Ken George and Colin Monteath, additional photography by David Tattersall



The action thriller *Vertical Limit*, director Martin Campbell's followup to *Goldeneye* and *The Mask of Zorro*, portrays a rescue team's attempts to save some climbers trapped in an ice cave atop K2, the second-highest peak in the world. During their ascent through extremely rugged terrain, the group must lug packs filled with unstable nitroglycerin, often with explosive results. Consequently, cinematographer David Tattersall, BSC faced the grueling task of not only creating beautiful, glacial images, but also shooting stunts, pyrotechnics and visual-effects plates in the most treacherous environment on earth.

Tattersall has shot several films on location, including *The Green Mile* (see AC Jan. '00), *Con Air* (AC June '97), *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace* (AC Sept. '99) and the recently completed *Episode II*, but he says that none of his previous experiences prepared him for the hourly unpredictability of filming in the New Zealand Alps, which doubled for the Himalayas in *Vertical Limit*. "We scouted all of the Southern Alps of New Zealand, taking thousands of photographs,

Photos courtesy of Columbia Pictures and David Tattersall.



looking for a location where we'd have lots of different alternatives for shooting the same sequence," Tattersall says. "Mount Cook was a very good duplicate location for K2; it has a similar shape and it rose about 10,000 feet from our base camp at the Hermitage Hotel to the pyramid peak — [the same distance] that the Himalayan base camp is from the top of K2. We worked on all sides of Mount Cook, perched on various ledges for 10 weeks, which gave us a really good idea of what our fictional climbers would be dealing with on K2."

Campbell says he envisioned *Vertical Limit* as *The Wages of Fear* (1952) on steroids. "That film was so brilliant, because the characters spend an hour in this damned village before anyone even mentions nitroglycerine!" the director says with admiration. Tattersall confirms that "Martin wanted to recapture the consistently tense feel of that film, to the point of having these climbers carrying nitroglycerin, which could go off at the slightest vibration. He's brilliant at tightening the corkscrew, and by the end of the movie he's got the audience completely exhausted."

Campbell strove to avoid exhausting his crew as well, despite the rigors of the chosen location. "Everything was storyboarded in

great detail," Tattersall explains. "Martin organized his days in a pre-edited way, to the point of not really doing coverage, but just shooting the little pieces he wanted. In fact, the finished film looks just like the boards!" Campbell explains, "I rehearsed thoroughly with the actors every night, and we would set up the camera moves and determine what was going to happen. Then there was no discussion once we're on the mountain — we stuck to what we'd worked out."



Despite its grand visual scope, *Vertical Limit* is not a widescreen film, for obvious reasons. During their location scout, Campbell and Tattersall noticed that if the image was too wide, the mountain peaks would be chopped off. "After taking all of those stills, we realized that the anamorphic ratio probably wasn't a good idea!" Tattersall says. "We would have loved to have made a big, sweeping mountain movie in a super widescreen format, but many of our compositions had vertical elements with a strong sense of height. There were a lot of sequences in which we planned to have actors above and below each other, using extreme high and low angles, and with the 2.35:1 aspect ratio we risked losing the mountain peaks or the valley bottoms or even the actors themselves in the cut. Therefore, we eventually opted to shoot in the 1.85:1 ratio, which gave us a better sense of the location and allowed us to exaggerate the feeling of vertigo."

Tattersall shot with four Panavision Platinum cameras, as well as a Panastar and a 435 for high-speed work. All of the cameras had to be winterized with built-in heaters to withstand temperatures as brutal as -20° Celsius. Tattersall also brought along Primo lenses — primes ranging from 14.5mm to 150mm, and

Opposite page: Dangling in a treacherous ice cave, Peter Garrett (Chris O'Donnell, top) struggles to pull his sister Annie (Robin Tunney) to safety, while Montgomery Wick (Scott Glenn) tries to reach Elliot Vaughn (Bill Paxton). This page, top: On location in the New Zealand Alps, the production flew a Giraffe crane up to high elevations on several occasions. After the crew laid 20' dolly track up on the mountain, the crane was assembled at ground level, then flown up in one piece by helicopter and dropped directly onto the tracks. Bottom: The camera captures a dramatic angle as a climber struggles to hold on.

Mountain High

While shooting in the mountains, the production used four helicopters to transport at least 20 loads per day to the required location. Assistant director Phil Patterson scheduled the drop-off sequence, which proceeded with "military precision," according to director Martin Campbell.



both 4:1 and 11:1 zooms. By coupling these wide-angle lenses with the spherical aspect ratio, Tattersall was able to achieve a tremendous sense of width and scope. "We found ourselves using wider and wider lenses," Tattersall remembers. "We were definitely going for a deep-focus look. It was a learning process, but we hit on this formula where we rarely shot longer than a two-inch [50mm]. We'd shoot medium close-ups with a 21mm lens slightly below the eyeline. That's very strong, but the size is critical. If we were four inches too close, the distortion was a little too noticeable, so we'd shoot close-ups with a 27mm and really big close-ups with a 35mm. We quickly learned that tracking all of that equipment up to these amazing places and then shooting close-ups on a 180mm was a complete waste of time."

Of course, just getting the equipment in place was a challenge. "All of our high-altitude Mount

Cook locations could only be reached by chopper," Tattersall says. "There was no way to drive, walk, or hike to them, so we had to helicopter 40 crew members and a fair amount of equipment up there. When you get up around 12,000 feet, the chopper's lifting capacity is severely restricted, because the air is thinner and there are gas considerations and weight issues. All of that work takes time [to plan and carry out]."

"We had four choppers and 20 or more loads, which meant five trips per chopper, and some of the locations were 20 minutes from the airport," he continues. "We actually got [the total transportation time] down to about two hours by making sure not to take any extraneous equipment. Every item was weighed and tagged so that the guys who were loading the chopper knew exactly how much weight they'd put on."

The crew also faced the unique challenges of shooting in sub-zero weather. "We had a special day set

aside for a field test," Tattersall says. "For the practice run, everybody put on their six layers of clothing, we rehearsed the helicopter-loading procedure, and then we choppered up to 6,000 feet. The crew and the actors hung onto ropes and marched across snow fields with heavy backpacks just to see what it was like. Then we practiced things like loading a camera with gloves on and the wind gusting up to 40 knots, and laying 40 feet of track on powder snow and then again on sheet ice. It was difficult for the camera boys."

However, Campbell notes that despite the location's nightmarish logistics, the shoot "had an almost military precision." Choosing the proper location for each day's shooting was an art in itself. "The call sheet always had four alternatives," Tattersall says. "The first choice was the best high-altitude choice for the given scene, usually the best-looking location but probably the most fragile, the most exposed and the most

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Mountain High

The crew sets up a shot of a climber scaling an icy wall.



likely to be hit with low clouds or high winds — all conditions that are dangerous for this type of work. The second choice was the same scene at a lower altitude, where we probably had a better chance of shooting if the weather was bad higher up. The third choice was at a lower altitude still, but involved shooting a different sequence that had already been designed for that particular location. The fourth choice was deep-weather cover, usually a tent interior or the artificially created storm sequence at base camp.

“As soon as the sun began to come up, the first chopper would go straight up to the first-choice location, but if that wasn’t possible, we’d gradually go down through the choices. Within 20 minutes, there would be radio contact to the base [about where we were going to shoot],” Tattersall details.

Assistant director Phil Patterson carefully scheduled the drop-off sequence. First up was emergency gear suspended in nets under the helicopter in which Patterson, Tattersall, Campbell and the mountain-safety crew were huddled. On the precious “good-weather days,” which typically featured clear skies and wind below

15 knots, the mountain-safety crew would begin stringing safety ropes and digging snow shelves. “During the initial scouts, the idea of shooting on these tiny little shelves seemed a bit daunting, but strangely enough, we got used to it,” Tattersall says. “The first thing you do when you get out of the chopper is clip onto the safety line, and away you go!”

Within two hours, the grip gear went up. That was followed by the crew and the camera gear, which was loaded in four 8' x 4' x 4' color-coded aluminum boxes — a system devised by key grip Dave Nichols that Tattersall says worked “brilliantly.” The aluminum boxes were dropped in a storage area far from the mountainside, then clipped onto safety ropes that were bolted into rock. The equipment was loaded individually into a dozen Tamrack ballistic nylon rucksacks that were customized to fit the Panavision cameras and lighting gear, and then carried to the “set.”

“As soon as you put a silver box down, the snow freezes onto it, it doubles in weight, and it becomes a deadly ice block that can instantly slide off the mountain,” Tattersall explains. “So we came up with a backpack theory — everything went into rucksacks. That way, everybody

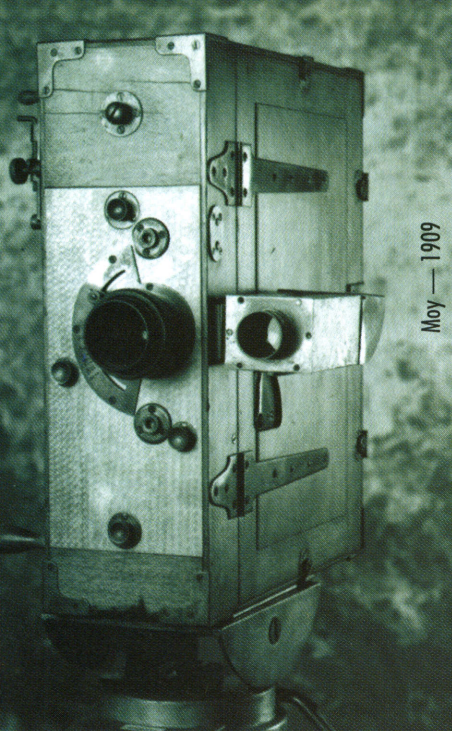
could carry a piece of equipment and still have two hands free to hold onto the safety ropes.”

Remarkably, the company flew a Giraffe crane up to the higher elevations on several occasions. “After we completely unloaded the first choppers, we laid 20-foot dolly track,” Tattersall relates. “The Giraffe crane was then constructed at ground level, choppered up in one piece and dropped right onto the tracks.”

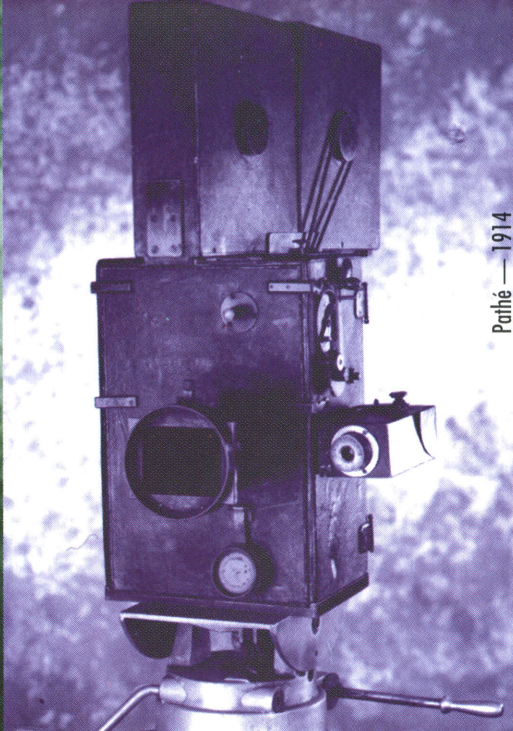
One type of equipment Tattersall couldn’t carry up to the high-altitude locations was a big lighting generator. “All we could manage were two little 3KVA generators to power a handful of 1.2K HMIs,” he recalls. “Gaffer Eddie Knight and his boys dug two holes about three feet deep and buried them in the snow, which got rid of the sound problem! To mold the light, we relied upon reflectors and black drapes. A lot of weight went into extra batteries, which were put into special insulated containers and used to power the camera heaters and the video-playback system.”

Last up the mountain — and first off — were the actors. Shooting was continuous over the next six or so hours, with no breaks for breakfast or lunch, because the time spent eating might prove to be the one and only good time to shoot. “We shot French hours,” Tattersall says wryly. “After a bit of rehearsing, we’d probably turn over by 10 a.m.” Campbell’s plan was to shoot a sequence per day in each high-altitude location. “That was the optimistic, best-case scenario,” Tattersall notes, “but it usually didn’t work out that way. Mountain weather is *extremely* unpredictable.”

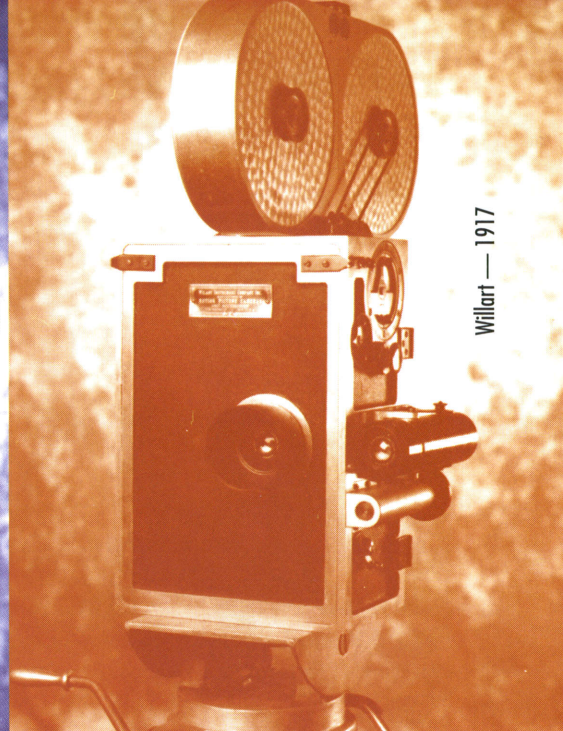
Retakes in the snowy landscapes could prove problematic, especially if the terrain had to look pristine (i.e., untrampled by humans) in take after take. “The set dressers came up with a reserve plan for doing take 2 or take 3,” Tattersall



May — 1909



Pathé — 1914



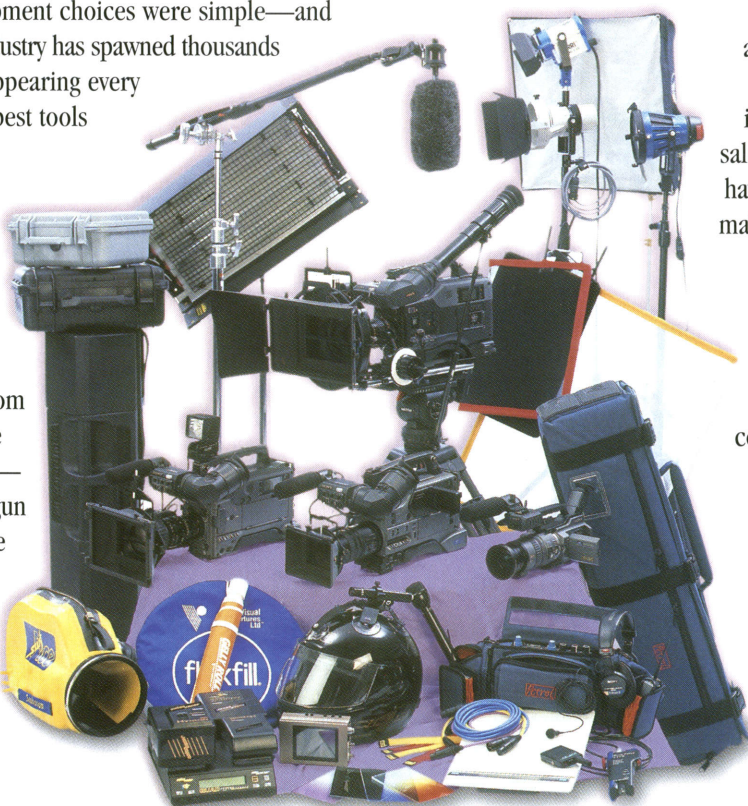
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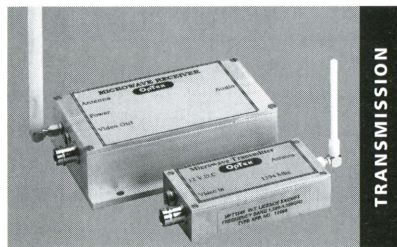
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Mountain High



Top: The production works on more level ground while creating a snowstorm at base camp. Below: Director of photography David Tattersall, BSC.

says. "In those sequences where we had mountain views that had been chosen very carefully to be shot at a certain time, we used a combination of techniques: we had one person retrace the actor's footprints, filling them in with loose snow as he backtracked toward camera, and we had a chopper over the top of the shot blowing a new, loose covering of snow over the whole area. It worked pretty well."

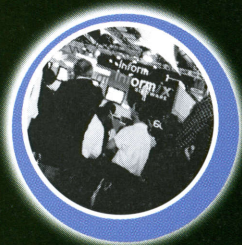
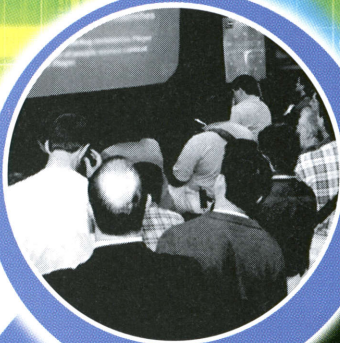
When weather permitted the company to return to the same high-altitude location over a number of days, the production often ran into fresh surprises. "If, say, it had snowed

in the evening and there were heavy winds in the morning, the wind-blown cornices would look like these ridiculously unbelievable, badly sculpted polystyrene snowblocks," Tattersall recalls. "They didn't look real, so we lost them using our trusty chopper method: we'd just hover a chopper over the location for a couple of minutes and let it blow the snowdrifts around in a different way."

Perhaps Tattersall's greatest challenge was to create a sense of depth while shooting across a pristine vista at the highest elevations. "We could shoot in slightly less-than-perfect weather lower down, but our only chance of shooting on the very high locations was if the weather conditions were perfect, which meant no clouds, no wind, no aerial perspective," Tattersall says. "With the clear air, the views looked like artificial cycloramas, so we'd often try to arrange the shots in a backlit or crosslit situation, shooting into the shadows of the opposite side of the valley. Those are the two best ways of showing the location, since frontlit snow is just very boring. The biggest problems were 'controlling' the weather, and making scenes that



Continued on page 60.



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A PEAK PERFORMANCE

The adrenaline-fueled *Vertical Limit* was filmed on location in the mountains of the Pakistani Himalayas, New Zealand and Utah, but ironically, its terrifying, high-altitude imagery did not look real enough without the aid of visual effects. Director Martin Campbell therefore brought in visual-effects supervisor Kent Houston, a colleague from Campbell's commercial days, whose credits include the wacky imagery in *Time Bandits* and *12 Monkeys*.

Houston contracted U.K.-based effects house Peerless, which he owns, and L.A.-based Digiscope and Anohana (with whom he is currently partnered) to create more than 400 effects shots that effectively take audiences to the peaks of K2. "*Vertical Limit* is an interesting movie; it's got a lot of visual effects, but they're all reality-based, so everything is photo-real," Houston observes. "There's a lot of material that people are familiar with, like snow and helicopters and general alpine imagery, which provided quite a challenge in terms of the effects. This is an action-adventure film, so a lot of sequences involved phenomenal stunts that were impractical or just too dangerous to film on location. We basically shot what we could for real, and then used bluescreen to work in our CG digital background paintings and 3-D models to carry off the sequences."

The film opens with a vertiginous sequence in Utah, wherein Peter Garrett (Chris O'Donnell), Annie Garrett (Robin Tunney) and their father (Stuart Wilson) are happily climbing on The Castle, a treacherous peak in Monument Valley, when things go horribly wrong. The sequence was designed by stunt coordinator and second-

unit director Simon Crane. "We originally [considered] filming the whole sequence on location in Utah, but we realized it was going to take forever, and we also butted into some potential weather problems," Houston recalls. "So we actually built two walls in New Zealand that closely resemble The Castle; one was built outside and was about 120 feet high, and the other was not as high and was built on stage and surrounded by bluescreen. We shot the principal actors [on the latter]. We never shot them outside. There's a lot of dialogue initially, and filming on the interior stage wall was pretty tough for the actors, who were in harnesses and wire rigs all day long. But we got some fantastic stuff."

"Then the falls start, and [the editors] did some very clever intercutting between the stunt falls, which were shot on the outside wall, and the real actors on the stage. That particular sequence required more stunt-unit and what we called 'mountain rigging' than visual effects. The mountain-rigging coordinator was Mike Weis, who's very good, and he basically set up a lot of wire rigs and winches. We were able to get some absolutely amazing falls. For some of the falling shots, we actually dropped the camera with the stuntmen against bluescreen, so you actually feel that you're falling with them. It's horrifying!"

"We also did a three-day shoot in Utah using a number of the stunt-people from New Zealand," he continues. "I photographed Monument Valley from a ledge 600 feet up, then we tiled that together digitally to make a very high-resolution environment. Digiscope did a lot of high-quality tracking and 3-D match-moving of the camera, so it looks as if these guys are falling in

what appears to be Monument Valley. They mixed bluescreen [footage] from New Zealand with the actual falls coming from the plate in the shot, extended the wall set, and handled rig and crash-pad removal. It's absolutely breathtaking — and gut-wrenching!"

Ironically, perspective created problems even in craggy Monument Valley. "The Castle is a very high peak, but when you're moving 300 or 400 feet, there's not too much range in perspective because the distances are actually far greater than you think," Houston observes.

Campbell ran into the same problem when he dispatched a unit to K2 to shoot plates: the real peaks often looked fake. "From a distance, something could be 10,000 feet high or it could be 500 feet high; there's no scale when you're out there," Campbell observes. "Standing on K2 itself, you'd never know it's so large, because you have to stand way back to look at the mountain as a whole to appreciate its size."

Such reverse forced-perspective threatened to derail "First Nitro," one of *Vertical Limit's* major setpieces, in which one of three rescue teams attempts to make a very difficult climb despite avalanches and the lack of hand-holds — while carrying packs filled with nitroglycerine. One of the climbers, Cyril (Steve Le Marquand), slips and careens over a precipice. Meanwhile, his partner Monique (Izabella Scorupco) tries to pull him to safety, but the nitro slips out of his pack and explodes on the valley floor below, wreaking havoc for both climbers.

Creating the sequence involved live-action photography on location, explosives courtesy of special-effects supervisor Neil Corbould (whose recent credits include *Gladiator* and *Saving Private Ryan*), onstage stunt work coordinated by Weis, and digital effects courtesy of Digiscope. Once again, the location work was not up to Hollywood action standards,

despite Houston's best hair-raising efforts. "We were trying to shoot plates to capture that feeling of drop, so both the visual-effects producer and I literally hung by our feet over these horrendous drops," recalls Houston, a former New Zealand Alpine National Parks assistant ranger who's done his share of climbing. "When you're there, it's terrifying, but the minute we shot those images they looked like nothing at all! There's nothing down there that gives you a sense of depth on film, so we had to employ an awful lot of tricks — digital matte paintings, falling debris and so on — to convey the sense of height."

Although the visual-effects crew could hang off a cliff if they felt like it, such stunts were considered much too dangerous to film on location. Consequently, actors Le Marquand and Scorupco spent hours slipping and sliding atop — and then ultimately hanging from — a high setpiece onstage as Campbell directed complicated crane shots chasing past them. "There were a series of stunt shots of one of them sliding down the slope on location," Houston says. "However, most of the sequence involved a traumatic visual-effects shot in which the camera follows Cyril as he slides toward the ledge. When he actually disappears over the edge, the camera sails beyond the ledge, then turns around and looks back at him hanging, supposedly over an enormous chasm. In fact, the ledge was a set about 40 feet off the stage floor, and we shot a very long Steadicam-type move with the camera on a Giraffe crane, following him out to the edge. It's a spectacular shot."

When Monique tries to rescue her comrade, they both end up hanging onto a cornice of ice, which then breaks away and drops several thousand feet to the valley gorge below — after they've managed to hook themselves onto the cliff itself. "The cornice was a mixture of things,"

Houston reveals. "It was a full-size wood-and-plaster setpiece on vertical, railway-like track that was built by Corbould's crew; it could drop about 35 feet and explode against what looked like a rock outcropping. Digiscope augmented that with model miniature work and CG set extensions to actually make the cliff and the valley below look scary."

In another adrenaline-pumping sequence, a military pilot takes the rescue team up in a helicopter and attempts to drop them onto Negrotto Col, a narrow ledge on K2 with a sheer 3,000' drop below. "There's nowhere for [the helicopter] to land, the chopper's very short of power and is having trouble hovering at that altitude, and it's pretty windy; in the scene, people are jumping from the helicopter's skids to the ledge," Houston adds. "That was pretty hazardous, so that sequence features a lot of bluescreen work. We built the ledge as a live set, then Corbould put a helicopter fuselage — just the main cabin without the tail or the rotors — onto a gimbal rig, which held the chopper from underneath or from above, depending on the shot. In many shots, they removed the windows because they were reflecting light, so [technicians at] Peerless replaced them in CG, along with the rotors, the tail and the tail rotor. They also extended the set itself and added another digital matte-painting background, and because the helicopter was hovering near a snowy ledge, we added loads of CG snow."

The crew at Peerless also came to the rescue when the second-unit location crew found its access to the real K2 somewhat limited because of the political situation in northern Kashmir. Consequently, the task of creating the widest vistas of the Himalayas often fell to Houston's team. "We used photographic plates whenever possible, but we also had Mike Joyce's company, Cinema Production Services, build a large

model miniature of K2 and the surrounding region," Houston explains. "The miniature K2 was about 13 feet high, and the entire miniature landscape was built on a slightly angled deck that was probably about 60 feet square. It was a very beautiful model that we could film in a particular light, and we could get angles on it that we just weren't able to get [on location]. Photography of the miniature was directed by David Hardberger and was actually shot outdoors in Van Nuys!"

Although the skies of Van Nuys occasionally looked pretty convincing behind the K2 miniature, Eric Chauvin and Richard Kriegler [of Anohana] supplied a number of digital matte paintings to add the striking, lenticular cloud formations that occur at very high altitudes when a storm is about to hit. For a final touch of realism, Houston's team often supplied an unusually large variety of drifting snow. "Snow has a phenomenally wide range of characteristics, depending on the ambient conditions," Houston notes. "There's a saying that the Eskimos have something like 300 different words for snow, and now we know why!"

"This is really my first [predominantly] visual-effects movie, though we had some in both *Goldeneye* and *The Mask of Zorro*," Campbell notes. "Kent managed to keep the work on budget and still get everything we wanted! He's totally unflappable and very astute. We never could have done this film without [digital technology]; it would have been way too dangerous."

"Still, I find it very difficult to do digital-effects movies," Campbell concludes. "You're fixing up this element and that little bit of snow — you want to tweak those damned shots forever! There's a point where you've just got to say, 'To hell with it. We're out of money and we're out of time.'"

— Ron Magid

Mountain High

would only last for one minute onscreen look consistent — even though they had been shot over 10 hours throughout the day, as the light changed from one side of the sky to the other. It was tough to keep any sort of continuity from the first shot to the last shot of the scene, with the weather and the light quality changing hourly. We were constantly adjusting our exposure, filtration and film stocks throughout the day.”

Tattersall used Kodak EXR 5245 stock for those day exteriors. “I like the 45’s fine grain, and while shooting at 50 ASA we generally had exposure to spare and good depth of field. I used 5246 for the low-light exteriors, and the FX 200 stock for stage work. We chose the 200 because there was a reasonable amount of bluescreen work on two sequences, and there’s no doubt that you can get a clean, better-quality matte with that stock. I find the untweaked look of FX 200 a little hard; my favorite stock for stage work is ordinarily 5277. But once the 200 was scanned into the digital realm, [visual-effects supervisor] Kent Houston digitally adjusted the gamma to reduce the contrast.”

No matter how demanding shooting was on a given day, the crew was always done by mid-afternoon. “By 3:30 or 4 o’clock in the afternoon, depending on the complexity of the shot and how much equipment and how many crew members had been brought up, we’d start to ferry off equipment,” Tattersall says. “We’d try to schedule things so that the last shot of the day took place with the actors against the setting sun. There would probably be one camera, one assistant, two safety mountaineers, myself, Martin and one or two actors left, and we’d try to get that shot before we took the very last chopper off the mountain.”

However, it was riskiest shooting at the higher elevations near magic hour. “As soon as the sun sets, the temperature drops 20 degrees,” Tattersall points out. “The chopper

pilot had to keep the helicopter’s blades running while the sun was still in the sky, because if the chopper stalled and the blades froze, we ran the risk of spending the night on the mountain.”

Many times Campbell and Tattersall would begin shooting a sequence, only to be instructed to scramble off the mountain when the weather turned ugly. In the best-case scenario, grouses the cinematographer, “we’d often finish shooting without having completely finished our coverage. There were probably a dozen or more times where we had to get off the mountain quickly, so lots of sequences were shot on the

“We were stranded at 9,000 feet, 14 miles from base camp. It was a complete whiteout; we could barely see 25 feet in front of us.”

— David Tattersall

second attempt at a different location; we had to cheat to make the shots look the same.”

The filmmakers did confront the worst-case scenario one day, when they found themselves trapped on the mountain and unable to get themselves or their equipment off. “We’d received instructions to pack up quickly and prepare for the choppers to take us out, but the clouds came up from the valley below, and the choppers weren’t able to get in,” he recalls. “We were stranded at 9,000 feet, 14 miles from base camp. It was a complete whiteout; we could barely see 25 feet in front of us. We had a full-time weather staff that was in constant radio contact with the local and even the most distant weather

stations, but even if you take all of the precautions with mountain weather, you’ve got a better chance of predicting things if you simply roll some dice!

“Fortunately, we had two very experienced guides: Guy Cotter, a New Zealander who’s been to the top of Mount Everest twice, and Ed Viesturs, an American who’s climbed 12 of the world’s 14 highest mountains without oxygen! The safety climbing team tied us all together and led us out of there, gingerly prodding the snow with 12-foot poles to check for hidden crevasses. Then, for about an hour, we were walked down through the clouds along the edge of the glacier, each of us carrying one or two rucksacks, to a clearer area where the choppers were able to pick us up.

“We weren’t able to carry all of our equipment out, and it wasn’t until three days later that the choppers were able to get back in. When they did, they found the cameras completely buried in 15-foot snowdrifts. The terrain had changed so much that if it weren’t for GPS [Global Positioning Satellite] and beacons, they would never have found the gear! Thankfully, we had a reserve camera package at the hotel, and we went to ‘weather guard.’”

On rare occasions, the weather actually helped the production. In a particularly providential instance, one of the film’s weather-cover sets was impinged upon by the weather itself. A serac field is created when a glacier slides over a rocky step on its way down into a valley, producing huge ice blocks that can crumble, crack and break off, creating a very jagged, treacherous minefield. Such areas are particularly deadly in the winter months, when snow bridges cover the smaller cracks, making the terrain appear even and safe. Early on in *Vertical Limit*, three characters (played by Robin Tunney, Bill Paxton and Nicholas Lea) make a hasty descent down K2 and fall into a

treacherous crevasse as they're making their way across a serac field close to the top of the mountain.

"That blizzard sequence was always meant to be one of our weather-cover scenes, because we could create it artificially with wind machines, painted snow and smoke machines in a reasonably controlled environment next to the base camp," Tattersall says. "The art department took over a small field close to the Hermitage Hotel, where they graded a ramp, laid artificial snow blankets and made a serac field with a small crevasse."

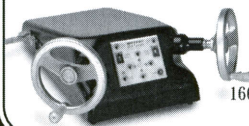
The environment did not remain controlled for long — but then, there's nothing like a real blizzard to give veracity to a blizzard sequence. "In fact, it improved the sequence considerably," Tattersall concedes. "On the first day of principal photography, weather cover was called, so we decided to start chipping away at the blizzard sequence on our 'serac field' set next to the hotel. Not only did the weather come in, but we were also fogged out; then a blizzard started, and by lunchtime we had six inches of real snow! That continued for three days, so we just carried on shooting it."

Realizing how difficult it was to light the snow, the cinematographer quickly developed some tricks to create a proper sense of drama and depth for the shots in the serac sequence. "The blizzard was meant to be a whiteout situation, but the idea of white-on-white — blowing snow against a white serac field in a whiteout — was a bit boring," he asserts. "Instead, we put artificial, bare-rock areas in the background to create a darker tone and contrast against the blowing snow in the foreground. The sequence worked completely as planned, except that we shot it all much quicker than we expected. The problem was that the mountain weather was just a constant, frustrating nightmare, and by the end of the second week, we'd

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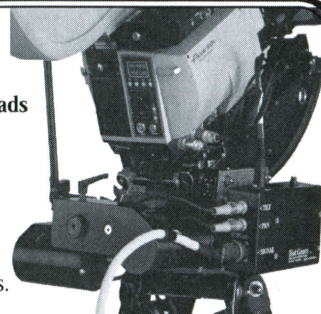


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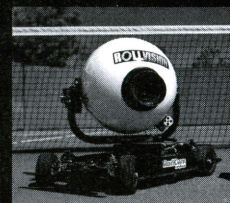
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Mountain High



A crane arm is put to work. In order to prepare for working at an altitude of 12,000 feet, the crew did field tests at 6,000 feet, according to Tattersall. "We practiced loading a camera with gloves on and the wind gusting up to 40 knots."

actually shot all of our weather-cover scenes!"

Deep-weather cover generally involved a retreat to Queenstown, where a specially built, hangar-sized stage that measured 100' x 100' x 70' high housed a remarkably detailed, 60' cliff set. The set was the site of several sequences in *Vertical Limit*, including the most hair-raising, dubbed "First Nitro." The setpiece

kicks into high gear when one of the rescue-team members slips on the ice and skids toward the precipice, desperately trying to break his momentum by plunging his ice axe repeatedly into the snow. Tattersall's camera chases the actor's stunt double all the way to the cliff, and as the climber goes over the edge, the camera careens into open space and turns around to glimpse the actor tenuously clinging to the bluff. Although the ravine below was created digitally, the bravura shot was accomplished purely in-camera. "That's something Martin visualized really early on," Tattersall says modestly. "He's very good at that."

The cliff set, which was almost the full height of the stage at one end and then steeply angled toward the precipice, was built on scaffolding and dressed with plaster and artificial snow. Making it look real — while being left with very little room to

hang lights — again taxed Tattersall's ingenuity. "I had my gaffer, Eddie Knight, and key grip, Dave Nichols, suspend a 100-by-100-foot silk over the whole set, and 80 space lights above that," Tattersall reveals. "I then had a huge, 100K key made out of a bunch of Maxi-Brutes hung on a swiveling truss above the low end of the set. Finally, we had several 24K Dinos bouncing off three 40-by-40-foot white bouncers hanging from the open walls. There was a fair amount of light."

The camera was mounted on a Libra 3 remote head atop a Strada crane. Coordinating the timing of the camera move with the careening of the stuntman down the snowy slope and over the cliff demanded precision. "We rehearsed the move quite a few times with a weight bag at the end of the descender cable," the cinematographer says. "Once we got the timing right, we began shooting

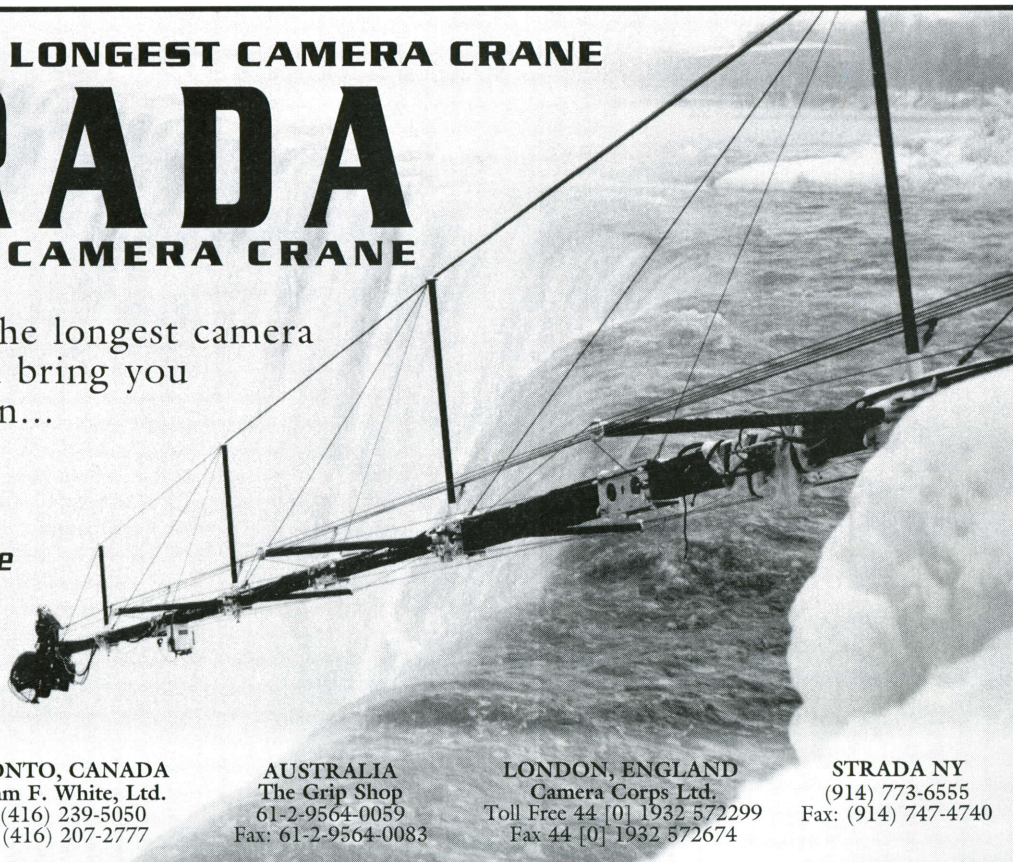
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with a stuntman. There was quite a swing, and because it was such a fast, whippy move, there was a risk of creating too much motion blur. We decided to shoot at a faster shutter speed, 48 frames per second, to get as much detail as possible, and then had it frame-cut back to the equivalent of 24 fps for sync. I think we got the shot in about eight takes.”

On the stage, as on location, choosing the right angle was crucial to creating the proper sense of the vertiginous drop below. “There was bluescreen immediately below the set and to the side, where Digiscope later added the valley below,” Tattersall recounts. “There’s something tricky that happens when you photograph looking straight down a cliff—it can look like a level plane. To get a more precarious effect, it works better to move off to the side and shoot at a more glancing angle, so there’s definitely an up and down, and the cliff

edge looks higher than the valley below.

“Actually, shooting down the cliff looked better when the camera was out in space looking back at the cliff,” he adds. “That way, the top of the frame was the top of the cliff, and the bottom of the frame was the bottom of the cliff. Then, to sell a sense of perspective, Martin came up with a brilliant idea, encouraging a constant cascading of snow and ice off the edge of the cliff.”

Amazingly, when principal photographed wrapped, the filmmakers had taken their craft to its true vertical limit, and everyone—except a few fictional characters—had survived. “We had little accidents here and there,” Tattersall says, “but for what was probably one of the most ambitious and dangerous films to be attempted in the mountains, we had a perfect safety record.”

“David did a fantastic job,”



Campbell says with admiration. “He’s the quietest man in the world, but he has a backbone of steel when it comes to what he believes the film should look like. When you’re shooting in the snow, you’re kind of limited in terms of what you can do—after all, you can’t really do lighting tests. But *Vertical Limit* looks beautiful on the screen.” ■

Using the crane arm enabled Tattersall to put the camera out in space looking back at the cliff, thus creating a more precarious effect.

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Unbridled Passion

Rising Mexican cinematographer Rodrigo Prieto transforms his native land into Cuba for director Michael Cristofer's *Original Sin*.

by Michael Singer

Unit photography by
Lourdes Grobet

It is believed that the first indigenous peoples of Mexico were baptized in the "new" Catholic faith, which had just been imported from Spain, in a 16th-century church located in the small town of Tlaxcala. On one recent day, statues and saints gazed down from the church's elaborately designed walls as the midday light slanted through the stained-glass windows, casting a colored halo onto the radiant couple being married at the altar below.

But all was not quite what it seemed in the Parroquia del Sagrario y Catedral de Tlaxcala. Incongruously, a huge Lenny Arm crane, set up on tracks and fully extended like a giraffe on its haunches, occupied a large space within the hallowed structure. The "midday light" was actually provided by a 6K Par and two 4K

Photos courtesy of MGM Pictures, Inc.

Pars blasting through the windows. And the couple being “married” were actors Antonio Banderas and Angelina Jolie — portraying Luis Antonio Vargas of Santiago de Cuba and Julia Russell of Baltimore, Maryland.

Welcome to the set of *Original Sin*, a romantic thriller written and directed by Michael Cristofer and photographed by Rodrigo Prieto. The picture is based upon Cornell Woolrich’s novella *Waltz into Darkness*, which also served as the basis for François Truffaut’s film *Mississippi Mermaid*. Woolrich, a noir pioneer who is perhaps best-known for penning the books *Rear Window* (from which Hitchcock derived his classic) and *The Bride Wore Black* (also adapted by Truffaut), was superb at evoking erotic obsession and its often unsavory consequences — like murder. Whereas Truffaut updated the 19th-century period piece *Waltz into Darkness* and set it on the French island protectorate of Reunion, Cristofer decided to retain the period for *Original Sin*, but replaced Woolrich’s New Orleans setting with Cuba. “New Orleans has been done to death onscreen, and I felt that Cuba would have the same exotic allure to today’s audiences that New Orleans had for Woolrich’s readers in the 1940s,” explains Cristofer, a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright (*The Shadow Box*) whose feature-directing credits include *Gia* and *Body Shots*.

Unable to film on location in Cuba, Cristofer decided to have Mexico stand in for the Caribbean island. Two key factors worked in Mexico’s favor: like Cuba, the region had been colonized by Spain and offered similar architecture; in addition, its film industry is currently experiencing a dramatic renaissance, and thus offers a substantial pool of talent. The current Mexican New Wave has produced such esteemed cinematographers as Emmanuel



Lubezki, ASC, AMC; Guillermo Navarro, ASC; Rodrigo Garcia, who collaborated with Cristofer on *Gia* and *Body Shots*; and, more recently, Xavier Pérez Grobet, who has just broken into the U.S. market as co-director of photography on Julian Schnabel’s *Before Night Falls* (see Production Slate, AC Jan. ’01).

It was Garcia who recommended Prieto to Cristofer for *Original Sin*. After Cristofer watched Prieto’s reel and *Un Embrujo* (*Under a Spell*), a period piece set in the 1920s and 1930s, the director decided that the cinematographer was perfect for his production.

Prieto’s accomplishments belie his tender age of 35. He has been nominated for Ariel Awards (Mexico’s equivalent of the Academy Award) three times and has won two (for *All of Them Witches* and *Under a Spell*). Born in Mexico City to a Mexican father and American mother, Prieto indulged his early interest in horror and science-fiction films by making Super 8 home movies with clay monsters he crafted by hand. Later, he studied at the Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica (CCC), the premier Mexican film school. When he began his studies, however, he realized that there was little hope that he and his classmates would

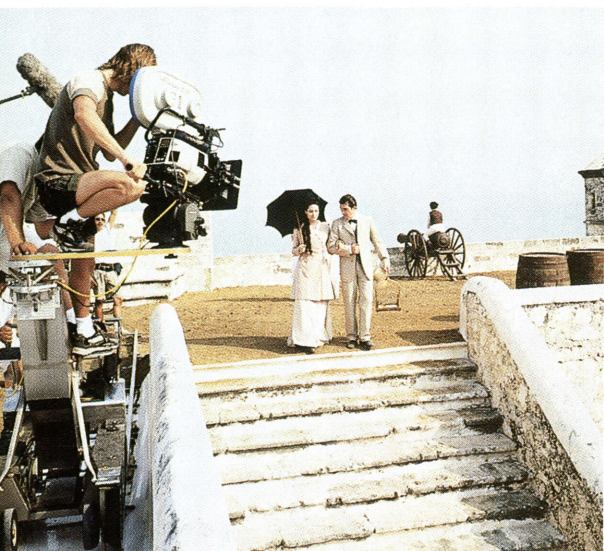
actually break into the Mexican film industry. “Although work was down and fewer films were being made, the unions were still shutting their doors to new people,” he recalls. “We all felt like we were pretty stupid to study cinematography, because it was virtually impossible to get into the union. I decided to study film because I loved it so much, but I never seriously thought I’d make a living at it!”

What helped Prieto and others like him break into the industry were the short forms of filmmaking: commercials and music videos. “Producers for commercials and music videos were seeking a different look than what we were accustomed

Opposite page: Romance ignites between American Julia Russell (Angelina Jolie) and Cuban Luis Antonio Vargas (Antonio Banderas). This page, top: Julia relaxes in her new environment. Bottom: The new bride is paraded through town.



Unbridled Passion



Top: On location in Mexico, the crew captures a walking-and-talking sequence featuring Julia and Luis.

Bottom: Julia becomes a more enigmatic figure after Luis marries her.



to seeing in Mexican features, so there was a necessity to incorporate new people [for those clips]," he notes. "That way, my generation got a chance to land work almost directly after graduating from film school. Features soon followed, even though the union had to be paid additional fees to permit us to work. Things have changed since then; it is no longer uncommon to see a cinematographer in his twenties shooting a movie."

Prieto's career took off quickly — he worked on only one commercial as a first AC before becoming a fully fledged director of photography. He then shot more than 500 ads for major corporate clients, winning the Circulo de Oro Award in 1994 for

his efforts. He moved into features with *Un Instante Para Morir* (1993) and he soon built a reputation for meticulous attention to visual and dramatic detail with such films as *Dama de Noche* and *Perfume Efecto Inmediato*. Prieto's work on *Sobrenatural* (*All of Them Witches*) in 1995 garnered him both an Ariel and a Diosa de Plata Award, as well as the Colombia Film Festival Award for Best Cinematography. This spring will see the release of *Amores Perros* (*Love's a Bitch*), Prieto's bold and controversial collaboration with director Alejandro Gonzalez Innaritu; the film took home the Prix de la Toute Jeune Critique at last year's Cannes Film Festival, as well as the Golden Frog at the Camerimage Festival in Poland.

As a student, Prieto was deeply affected by the work of Spanish-born cinematographer Nestor Almendros, ASC. "His whole sense of realism and being true to real sources of light fascinated me. Sometimes if you use a real source of light, you either don't get the proper exposure, or it just doesn't look the way your eyes see it, so you have to invent ways of making it look real. Almendros never failed in that respect.

"The two ends of the spectrum that influenced me the most," he continues, "were represented by Almendros and Sven Nykvist [ASC], with their realism and simplicity, and Jordan Cronenweth [ASC] and Vittorio Storaro [ASC, AIC], with their more elaborate, stylized methods. I was hoping to merge those two approaches somehow. Things happen in real life with light that make me feel something, and I want to translate those indefinable feelings to film. I think that lighting has to be believable within the context of a film, while helping to express the emotions that each scene needs. Just like an actor can spoil a scene by overacting, I think that lighting shouldn't call attention to itself or feel fake — unless that is

the desired effect."

Cristofer opted to shoot *Original Sin* in the Super 35 format, which Prieto calls "a challenge to an intimate story." He notes, "In the beginning, I was skeptical about shooting widescreen. When we scouted the locations, I took lots of still photos, and I found that we had a lot of arches, churches and other architectural structures that were vertical. I felt we'd lose that with a long frame, but Michael had shot 2.35:1 on *Body Shots*, and he really liked its compositional possibilities.

"With the longer frame, Michael would have a chance in a close-up to have something else happening in the background. He wanted more of the environment within the frame, and I must say that once we started shooting, I understood why he wanted to use Super 35. The compositions were really dynamic, and we could work with low-light sources in candlelit interiors appropriate to the period. If we had gone anamorphic, I would have needed higher light levels, but I wanted the real sources to provide part of the lighting, which was made possible by shooting wide open with Primo spherical lenses."

Prieto utilized Kodak Vision 250D stock for day interiors and exteriors, and Kodak Vision 500T for night interiors and exteriors. "What I like about the 250 is that you don't need to put so much glass in front of the lens, because the 85 filter isn't necessary," he notes. "You can shoot pretty late in the day with that stock because it's fast, but it's not so fast that the grain is noticeable."

Cristofer wanted highly choreographed camera movement on *Original Sin*, and during preproduction, he showed Prieto Max Ophüls's 1953 classic *The Earrings of Madame de...* (shot by Christian Matras), which is known for its dazzling tracking shots. "Michael wanted to follow a character into one place, with that leading to another charac-

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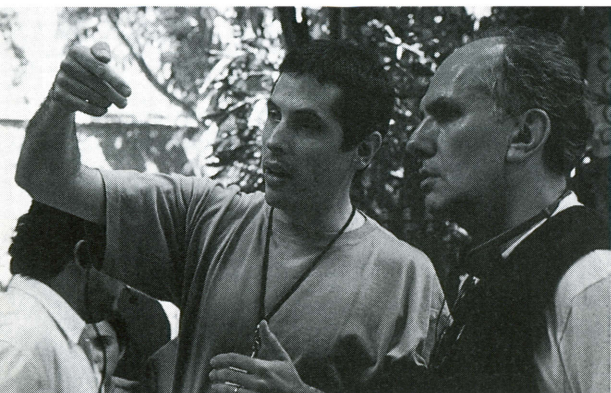
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Unbridled Passion



Top: Cinematographer Rodrigo Prieto, left, discusses an upcoming shot with director Michael Cristofer. **Bottom:** The crew readies a crane arm for a waterfront scene.

ter taking the camera to yet another place — discovery after discovery,” Prieto says. “The style would give each scene a flowing inner rhythm. Michael liked to find a way to shoot a scene in two or three shots. People might think that it’s easier if you have fewer shots, but the lighting becomes more complicated because you have to find ways to hide lights, cables, C-stands, everything. The extra effort pays off, though, by giving the shots a dynamic energy that enhances the storytelling.”

Despite the lushness of the production’s setting, Cristofer did not want *Original Sin* to be overly pretty. “He wanted the film to be starker, harder, even cooler sometimes,” Prieto explains. “The problem was that all of the light sources were warm. But for me, it was very important that the film look real, so we decided to stay true to the color of the light sources, gelling the units with ½ or ¾ CTO. While timing the movie at Deluxe with Kenny Becker, we cooled down the scenes lit with oil lamps or candles so they would seem cooler than you’d expect, but the color makes sense with the source.”

While Prieto tried not to rely too heavily on gels, he did use a combination of a ¼ CTB with a ½ Plus Green for moonlight. “The green takes a little of the blue edge off of the blue filter, [and it also] removes a bit of the magenta from the actors’ skin tones. The result is a sort of desaturated look on faces, which is what moonlight really does

when there’s no other light source.”

For diffusion, Prieto generally used 1000H tracing paper. “When I needed a little more punch, I used the 216 or 150, but in general tracing paper is my choice — except, of course, when I’m shooting exteriors. Tracing paper is too fragile for that work, so for exteriors I use full grid, half grid or HiLite, which is similar to Hampshire Frost. It’s very, very thin; it almost looks like dirty plastic. While it softens the harshness, you still feel the direct sunlight, which Michael wanted very much [considering that our setting was] hot, tropical Cuba.

“Wind was an important factor to deal with on location in Campeche,” he adds. “To hold the 12-by-12-foot frames in position, we often had to use ‘human sandbags,’ assigning grips and production assistants to each stand!”

To provide lighting, Prieto, gaffer Benito Aguilar and key grip Jesus Labastida used many types of Kino Flos. “Kinos are easy to set up, easy to hide, and they don’t take up a lot of space,” he points out. “We used all sorts of sizes, from Micro Flos, which we hid behind candles, to the Blanket-lite, which uses 16 six-foot Kino Flo lamps.

“The Blanket-lite is a very useful unit on location because it uses very little space for a 6-by-6 soft source,” he continues. “For one scene,

we had a couple of electricians following the actors around with it, hiding behind a column at the end of the shot. I also like Chinese lanterns because of their simplicity. Sometimes I put several of them together, maybe with dimmers flickered in different rhythms to simulate firelight.”

Because of Cristofer’s desire for flowing camerawork, Prieto had to constantly rig lighting units that could either be hidden or hung overhead; these even included tiny lightbulbs obscured by books or lamps. “Sometimes, to create an overhead soft fill, we would set lightbulbs two or three feet apart and string them together in an accordion pattern on top of a set, which gave us a nice, consistent light,” he details.

One of the most difficult sequences to light was a complex scene filmed inside of Tlaxcala’s 19th-century theater, the Teatro Xicohtencatl. “The logistics and prelighting of that theater — the audience stalls, the stage and backstage — were very complicated,” recalls Prieto. “I always knew we would have to do shots in 360 degrees, so I always had to invent something that was practical without being time-consuming.

“For the backstage scenes, I used the lightbulb system, with some space lights hanging overhead and Kino Flos hidden in some areas. It was also the first time we made



extensive use of the Steadicam, which is not widely used in Mexico. I was skeptical [of the rig]; I didn't have much experience with it, and the experiences I'd had weren't very good."

Steadicam operator Christopher George helped change the cinematographer's mind. "Chris was a revelation for me," Prieto enthuses. "He proved to me that you can do Steadicam shots that don't necessarily look like Steadicam shots, with wobbly, imprecise movements. I had always preferred handheld shots, because even though they're shaky, they're precise. You can always hit the correct framing, which I never trusted Steadicam to do. But Chris was always right on the button."

"I was also worried that with Steadicam, I wouldn't be able to light the way I like to, but Chris was great at keeping the flags out of frame," Prieto adds. "Every time we were shooting with Steadicam, I was crossing my fingers and praying he'd get it right. I'm a believer now!"

George notes, "I found that in some ways, Mexican crews do work differently than Americans, but they have a camaraderie that's unique to Mexican culture. The great pleasures in working with Rodrigo were his skill with lighting, his openness and sensitivity to the environment, and his desire to use Steadicam as a tool to enhance his and Michael Cristofer's storytelling style."

Detailing a prime example of Cristofer's camera strategy, Prieto and George refer to Luis and Julia's wedding reception, which was filmed inside the elegant precincts of the 16th-century Hotel de Cortes in Cuernavaca. "The first difficulty was for Rodrigo to light a very tall and cavernous set," George explains. "Luckily, I only had to operate! Rodrigo took on the heavy work of lighting, which allowed me the pleasure of concentrating on production designer David Bomba's fabulous set, [which featured] a long table layered high with delicacies, flower arrange-

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Unbridled Passion

ments and a multitude of burning candles.

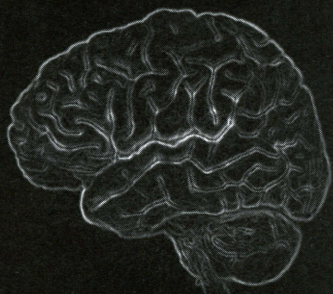
"At one end of the room was a musical quartet, and there were many guests dancing, mingling and eating, with children chasing each other back and forth," George continues. "My job was to show it all. Michael and Rodrigo designed one large, sweeping shot starting close on a child annoying the musicians, then traveling past the dancers, the wedding cake, the long table of food and finally to the matrimonial couple, with Julia convincing a protesting Luis to dance with her. We proceed to the waltz, with the camera starting wide and encompassing the onlookers, then circling closer to Luis and Julia in a tightening box step. We arrive at an over-the-shoulder on Julia's eyes, then slowly cross behind to Luis's eyes as the camera witnesses the emotion in the actors' eyes."

Prieto has great praise for his crew on *Original Sin*, some of whom were working on an American production for the first time. "Arturo Castaneda, my A-camera first assistant, has worked with me for several years in commercials and movies, and he's just amazing. He has an incredible knack for distance and focus, and I think that's an ability you have to be born with. He's also sort of invisible — he can be right next to the camera, but he actually is able to melt into it in such a way that he never distracts the actors.

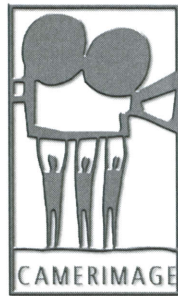
"Benito Aguilar and Jesus Labastida, our gaffer and key grip, are also extraordinary, quiet, incredibly hard-working men who never say that something's impossible to do."

For Prieto, working on a mixed U.S.-Mexican crew felt absolutely natural, considering his lineage. "I've always had a foot on either side of the border," he says. "I definitely had a bi-cultural upbringing. My mother always spoke to us in English while making sure we kept our Mexican customs and traditions. I feel as if the border is fading for me." ■

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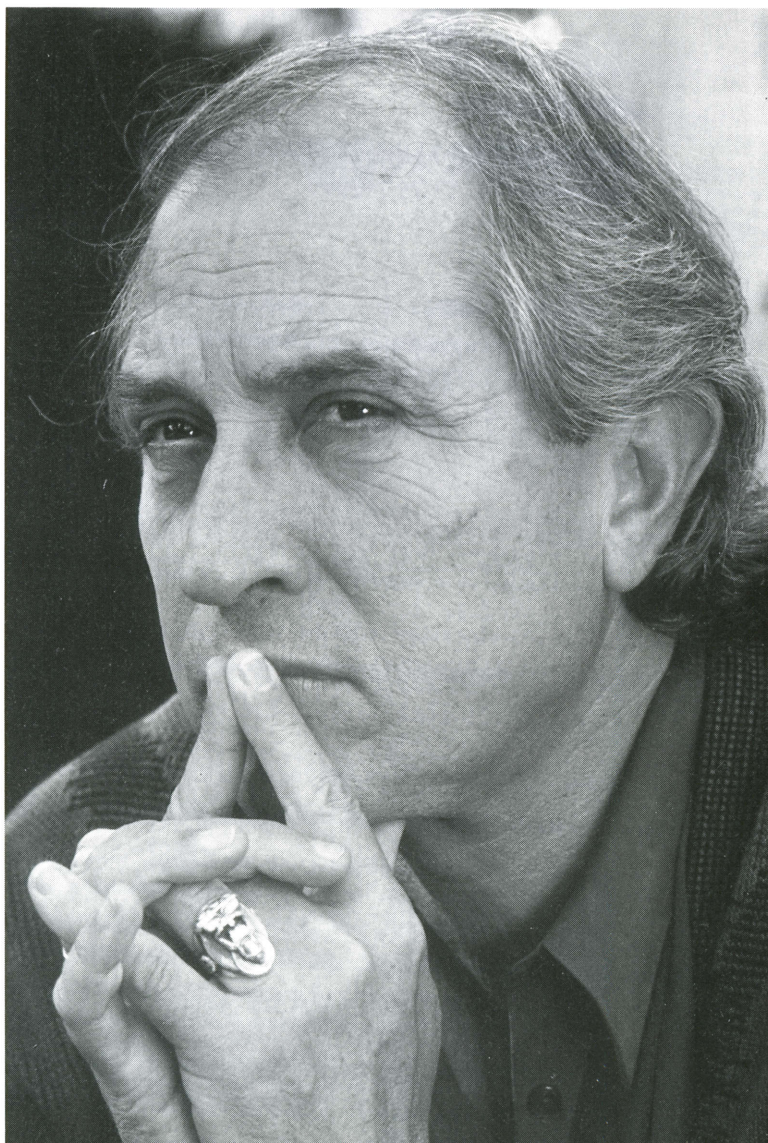
The American Society of Cinematographers honors Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC with its Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his incomparable artistic achievements and farsighted perspective.

by Bob Fisher

How do you explain the impact that Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC has made on the art and craft of filmmaking within the boundaries imposed by words on a page?

One traditional measure is the Academy Award for Best Cinematography, which Storaro has taken home three times, for *Apocalypse Now* (1979), *Reds* (1981) and *The Last Emperor* (1987). (He earned a fourth nomination for *Dick Tracy* in 1990.) Another measure is the fact that this month, the 60-year-old cinematographer will become the youngest-ever recipient of the ASC's Lifetime Achievement Award, which director and frequent collaborator Francis Ford Coppola will present to him at the ASC Awards in Los Angeles on February 18.

Storaro's eclectic body of work includes the films *The Conformist*, *1900*, *Last Tango in Paris*, *La Luna*, *One From the Heart*, *Ladyhawke*, *Tucker: The Man and His Dream*, *Bulworth*, *Tango* and the recent *Goya*



Photos courtesy of Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC.

in *Bordeaux*, as well as the television miniseries *Dune* (see story on page 104) and *Peter the Great* and the opera *La Traviata*. He also shot the 15-hour documentary *Roma Imago Urbis* (*The History of Rome*), which plays at museums around the world, and *Captain Eo*, an extraordinary 3-D film that played at Disney's Epcot Center in Florida for years.

Storaro has also been an outspoken advocate for the artistic rights of cinematographers as co-authors of the films they help to create. "Cinema is not an individual art," he says. "It takes many people to make a movie. There is a common intelligence. There is no doubt that the cinema is a language of images, and images are revealed and concealed by light and shadows. Cinema is never reality; as in painting or photography, you make decisions about what to show the audience with the use of space and movement and colors — so you are superimposing your interpretation."

He continues, "The editor chooses which images to use and in what order. There is also music, which establishes the mood. What the ear hears affects what the eye sees, and of course, it all begins with the writer. All of these people are working under one director, but everyone is making individual contributions. A movie is a symphony played by soloists. That is why we need co-author rights for cinematographers — to protect the integrity of the art."

During the 1970s, when most cinematographers were still describing their craft as "painting with light," Storaro expressed a more complex idea. He maintained that cinematographers write with light and motion, adding that this concept is conveyed in the literal translation of the Greek words for "cinematography." There is more than a semantic difference between "painting" and "writing" with light, Storaro explains: "It is the real meaning of what we are trying to accomplish. It is a visual language



Opposite page: The maestro in a contemplative mood. This page: Storaro cuts a flamboyant figure on the set of *Agatha* (1979) with Dustin Hoffman.

with its own vocabulary and unlimited possibilities for expressing ideas and feelings."

Storaro was born in 1940 in Rome, where his father was a projectionist at Lux Film Studio. "My father dreamed of what it would be like to be a cinematographer," Storaro recalls. "He put that dream into my heart." As a youngster, Storaro sat in the booth while his father projected films for producers and directors. He couldn't hear sound in the booth, so Storaro learned to read the images. When the studio installed a new projector, his father brought the old one home. "My brothers and I painted a wall white and we set up little benches in the garden," he recalls. "My father showed us Charlie Chaplin films, which, of course, were silent."

Storaro began his formal study of photography at the age of 11 at Duca D'Aosta. He graduated at 16, but when he attempted to enroll at Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, the state cinematography school, he was told that he was two years too young.

Over the next two years, he spent mornings studying at the Italian Cinematographic Training Center. "It was a very small school,

but it gave me the feeling that I was still a student, and that was very important," he says. "I have always kept that feeling. I am still a student in the sense that there is always something to learn. I am always doing my own research."

During the afternoons, Storaro worked in a photography shop, where he swept the floors, developed countless rolls of film, and was eventually allowed to make and retouch prints. When he was 18, Storaro reapplied to the state film school, but he was told that the rules had changed — he would have to wait until he was 20. Storaro convinced the authorities to allow him to apply, but they cautioned that his chances were slim; there were about 500 applicants for only three openings.

Storaro was asked to submit a portfolio of still photos to the judges. He was one of 30 finalists selected to be interviewed. "I was one of the last people they interviewed," he remembers. "It was two o'clock in the afternoon, and there were 10 people seated at a long table questioning me. They were very tired. I was very shy, but I knew that if I failed I would probably end my career retouching

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Right: Storaro and director Bernardo Bertolucci examine their Mitchell camera while shooting *1900* in 1974. Below: Years later, during production of *Goya in Bordeaux* (2000), Storaro works out his lighting scheme with a computer-controlled dimmer system, which affords him maximum efficiency and control. Always at the forefront of the latest technology, the cinematographer made pioneering use of a dimmer board on Francis Coppola's experimental musical drama *One From the Heart* (1982).



other people's photos or printing pictures on driver's licenses."

The panel asked their first question, and Storaro spoke uninterrupted for two hours. He was the first of the three applicants selected that year.

Storaro recalls that the national film industry was supposed to hire two graduates from the school each year, and all of his teachers cautioned him that he would probably never get an opportunity to work in the industry. The day after gradu-

ation, Storaro was hired as a focus puller on an anamorphic film. He worked as an assistant cameraman on one other film before cinematographer Marco Scarpelli offered him the opportunity to operate the camera on the film *Il Mantenuto* (1961), directed by the actor Ugo Tognazzi. At the time, Storaro was 21 years old. "From that moment on, I considered the camera to be an instrument, like a pen that you use to draw images," he says. "Operating a camera is mainly about composition

and rhythm. I was very happy doing that. I also operated the camera on several commercials; while we were shooting, someone with a watch was timing every pan and zoom. He would say, 'You have four and a half seconds to do that shot.' It taught me how to make every second count."

After his third film as an operator, the industry in Italy went into a steep decline; instead of producing 300 films a year, it was only turning out about 10. Storaro was too shy to ask cinematographers he didn't know for jobs. "My mother was pushing me to find work, but by then I realized there was a lot I didn't know," he recalls. "I learned everything about technology at school, but nobody taught me how to interpret stories. I understood that we should use technology to express ideas. I decided to apply myself to studying art — music, literature, painting and philosophy."

For the next few years, Storaro studied Mozart, Rembrandt, Faulkner, Vermeer and Caravaggio, among other artists. Finally, in late 1963, a camera operator with whom he had worked asked Storaro to take a step backward and work as his first assistant on an upcoming feature, the second effort of a young director. "I decided it would be too arrogant to feel that because I was a camera operator yesterday, I couldn't be an assistant today," he recalls.

The director was Bernardo Bertolucci, and the film was *Before the Revolution*. "My first impression of Bernardo was that he had incredible knowledge, especially for someone so young," Storaro says. "Every shot was perfectly laid down and structured. He knew exactly how he wanted to use the camera. In my mind, he was the ideal director, but he was very young, and he kind of put himself on a pedestal. He had a certain kind of arrogance."

After that experience, Storaro went back to work as a camera operator. He also collaborated with



Vittorio Storaro
ASC, AIC

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Right: Bertolucci and Storaro bundle up while shooting *The Last Emperor* (1987), which earned the cinematographer his third Academy Award. Below: Storaro presents the ASC Board of Governors Award to his friend and collaborator Francis Coppola in 1998.



Camillo and Luigi Bazzoni on a series of short films. The government funded some of these, while the filmmakers financed others themselves. Storaro did some of the writing, but he mainly served as camera operator; he also did a lot of the cinematography.

At the end of 1967, Storaro worked as camera operator on a film with some “difficult and very complicated shots,” but the mystery was gone. He told the director that for the first time, he didn’t feel any emotion; it was like being a robot. It was time for him to take the next step.

Storaro earned his first cinematography credit for Franco Rossi’s black-and-white film *Giovinetza*,

Giovinetza (*Youthful, Youthful*) in 1968. “I finally felt that I could tell a full story,” he remembers. “It was a complete journey using all of the language of light, darkness and contrast. It was like your first love. I cried for two days before the movie was over because I knew it was going to finish, and I would never experience that emotion again if I photographed a million other films that were 100,000 times bigger.”

In 1969, Storaro was at work on his second film as a cinematographer Dario Argento’s *L’Uccello Dalle Piume di Cristallo* (*The Bird With the Crystal Plumage*), when Bertolucci called and said he wanted to meet to

discuss his next project. “I had dreamed about getting a call like that from Bernardo,” Storaro recalls, “but I also promised myself that if I opened the door and saw that look of arrogance still on his face, I would close the door and walk away. [But] our meeting was wonderful.”

Their first collaboration was *La Strategia del Ragno* (*The Spider’s Stratagem*), a film for Italian television. Soon afterwards, Bertolucci called to arrange a meeting to talk about another film, *The Conformist*. Bertolucci opened that meeting by telling Storaro that the cinematographer would have to use another camera operator. “He had just given me the script for *The Conformist*, and I said, ‘Well, I understand what you are saying and I respect you,’” Storaro recalls. “I gave him the script, said goodbye and stepped out the door. He followed me into the corridor and said, ‘Wait a minute. Let’s talk.’ I proposed that we start the picture with my operator, Enrico Umetelli, and if he wasn’t satisfied after a week, I would listen. The three of us have [since] worked together on many pictures!”

Storaro was 30 and Bertolucci was 29 when they collaborated on *The Conformist* in 1970. The film seemed to turn a new page in the art of filmmaking (see Q & A on page 84), and its impact was profound and widespread. John Bailey, ASC recalls that he was a college student in 1971 and was unsure of which path to follow until he saw *The Conformist*. He then decided to make cinematography his life’s work.

Owen Roizman, ASC had just finished shooting *The French Connection* when he and his wife went to see *The Conformist*. He recalls, “I said to her, ‘I’ll never be able to do work like this. I’d better get out of this business now.’ I felt totally intimidated.”

Kenneth Zunder, ASC observes that an entire generation of cinematographers was influenced by



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Above: Storaro hits the Moroccan desert in high style during the 1989 production of Bertolucci's *The Sheltering Sky*. Right: Flanked by presenters Rachel Ward and Chevy Chase at the 1982 Academy Awards ceremony, Storaro receives his second Oscar for *Reds*.

Storaro's work in that film, and that their work is now influencing the next generation. "I think in that film, [Storaro] was the first contemporary cinematographer to allow scenes to play in the shadows," Zunder says. "His influence is pervasive. Years ago, when I was shooting *thirtysomething* [at the beginning of my own career], the producers told me it was okay to play people in the shadows and to let actors off the edge of the frame. They said, 'Let the images tell as much of the story as the script and actors.' All of us have benefitted from the pioneering [work] that Vittorio did."

Apocalypse Now was Storaro's first Hollywood film and marked the beginning of his collaboration with Coppola (see Q & A on page 94). During the opening scenes of this epic Vietnam War film, colors are almost monochrome. Then, as the conflict moves deeper into the jungle, Storaro imposes an unnatural color (red) on a natural one (green) to visually represent the escalation of the conflict. By the end of the film, the use of color borders on surrealism.

A few months ago, almost a

dozen years after Storaro shot *Apocalypse Now*, he was in a telecine suite with colorist Lou Levinson supervising the transfer of the film to DVD. Levinson was working on a scene shot on a wide river cutting through the jungle, and there was a slight orange mist floating on the river. "Make that a little more red," Storaro said, "but keep the green the same. More red. More. Can you keep the green the same? Wait. That's right."

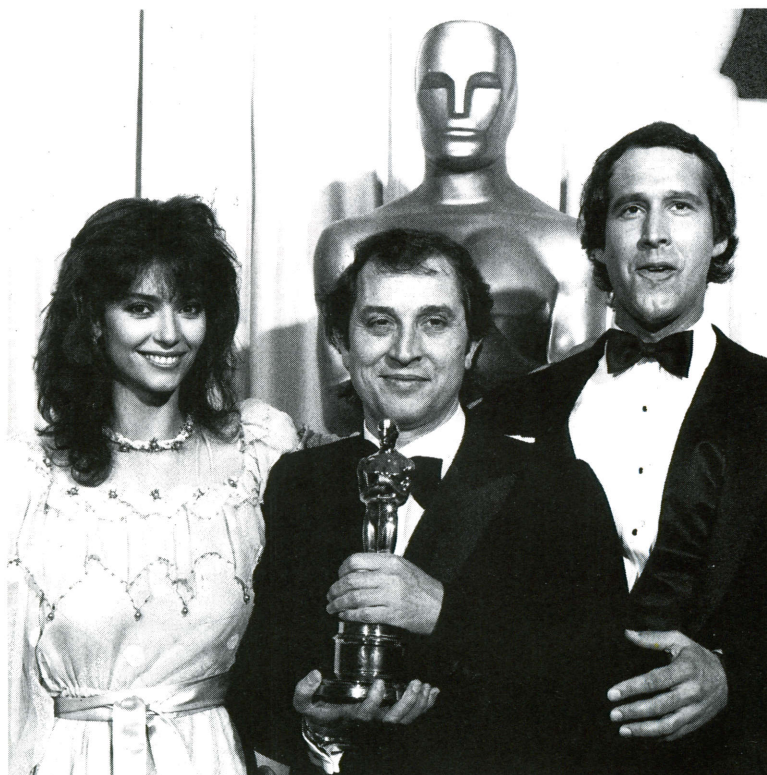
Watching this process was like observing an artist transferring tiny dabs of paint from his palette onto a canvas. To a casual observer, the images on the video monitor were only subtly different, and the changes as imperceptible as a gentle breeze that doesn't stir a hair. But each shot was a thread in the overall fabric of the film, and when all of the threads were in place, the subtle adjustments amplified the texture of the story.

Storaro believes that all movies are a resolution of a conflict between light and shadows. Light reveals the truth, and shadows obscure it. In early scenes of *The Last Emperor*, Pu

Yi (the emperor) is isolated in the Hidden City, shielded from knowledge of the outside world. During this period, the emperor is always cloaked in shadows — even during brightly lit exterior scenes, in which servants hold umbrellas over his head. Sunlight never touches his face until Pu Yi begins to understand that there is an outside world.

Storaro uses colors like a language. "There is no doubt that every color is a specific wavelength of energy that can represent or symbolize a specific time of life," he explains. "The meanings of colors are universal, even if they have different meanings in different cultures. Even if the audience doesn't see the meanings of different colors, they can feel them."

Storaro structures his use of colors on the Greek philosophers' belief that four primary elements bring balance to our lives: water (green), fire (red), earth (ocher) and air (blue). He believes that when our lives are in balance, these colors combine to form pure energy, which is white. During his preparation for



every film, Storaro writes an "ideology" that guides his use of colors for conveying information and emotional subtext.

This "ideation" is never quite the same. In *Dick Tracy*, he used bold colors, purple roads, cobalt-blue skies, green reflections and yellow shafts of light as a conspicuous signal to the audience that this was a comic book on film. Viewers could identify heroes and villains simply by color.

In *The Last Emperor*, there is an unforgettable moment staged in a courtyard, in which the sun appears as a giant red ball on the horizon. It suddenly drops below the horizon, and the red tones that had permeated the scene vanish. There is a brief interval of neutral color saturation before the moon rises, and then the color of light becomes an increasingly deeper shade of blue. This transition tells the audience, in clear metaphorical terms, that the sun had set on the Chinese empire.

From the beginning of his career, Storaro has also searched for ways to perfect his control over artificial light. He made a giant stride in that direction while working with Coppola on *One From the Heart* in 1981; on that ambitious project, he pioneered the adaptation of stage-lighting techniques for the cinema by presetting all of the lights on a dimmer-control system. Storaro refined that technique in 1986 when he filmed the miniseries *Peter the Great* in the Soviet Union. By using AC current instead of the DC that was more popular in the film industry, he created the advantage of using a comparatively smaller control console (which Storaro labeled an "electronic desk") that could be operated by one person. This enabled Storaro to orchestrate the color, intensity and direction of light in more precise synchronization with physical factors, such as the actors and cameras, and to create subtle or obvious transformations of time or mood.

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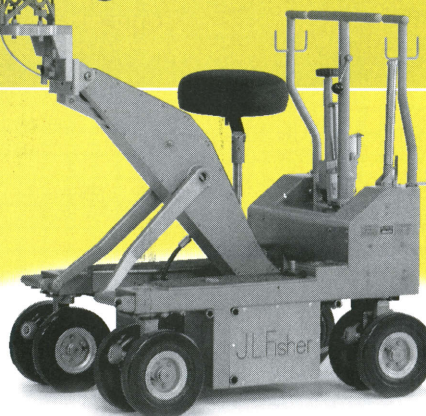
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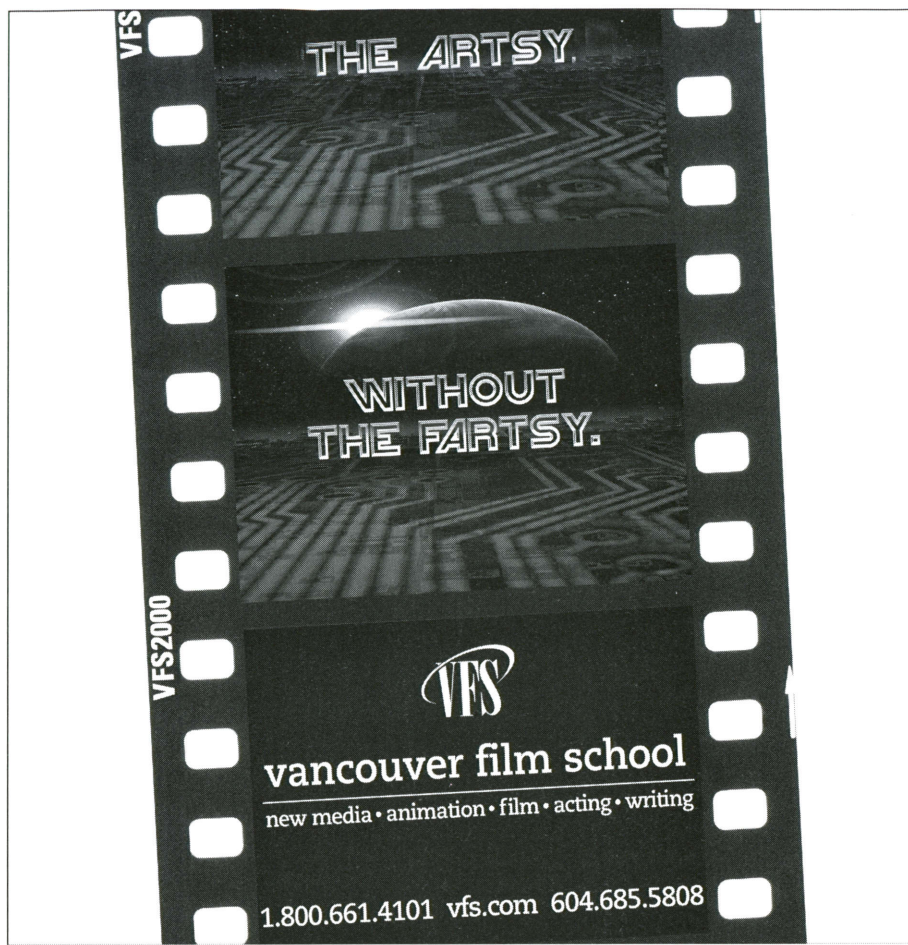
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This technique is now widely accepted and has made cinematography comparable to choreography, with a liquid consistency linking light, colors, movement and time. It can be applied not only to complex situations, but to all shots. For example, in *The Last Emperor*, there is a scene in which the Japanese invaders have Pu Yi seated in a small conference room. As he is confronted with the reality of his situation, Storaro orchestrates the passage of time from day to night by gently manipulating the color, angle and quality of



Actor/director Warren Beatty confers with Storaro during the filming of *Dick Tracy* (1990). The colorful comic-book caper earned the cinematographer his fourth Oscar nomination.

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sunlight streaming through a window behind the emperor.

Storaro also pioneered the use of the proprietary ENR process developed by Ernesto Novelli-Raimond, his longtime collaborator at Technicolor Labs in Rome. The cinematographer first used ENR during the production of *Reds* (1981), which began his fruitful collaboration with Warren Beatty. This technique allows the cinematographer to record deeper, more saturated blacks by retaining more silver

during the processing of prints. Storaro was the first and, for many years, the only cinematographer to regularly employ this technique. Most labs now offer proprietary versions of the ENR process, and many cinematographers regularly incorporate ENR — or other special processes — into their visual strategies.

During the production of *Tango* (1997), Storaro explored new territory with director Carlos Saura, another frequent collaborator. The duo pioneered the use of a new, two-way TransLite as an alternative to

"I think of my career as a continuous search for balance and harmony between the opposing elemental forces of life: light and shadows, conscious and unconscious, matter and energy, men and women."

— Vittorio Storaro

building elaborate sets, shooting at real locations or digitally compositing image elements to place characters in settings that may have been impractical or impossible to shoot. Ninety percent of *Tango* was filmed on a single stage in Buenos Aires in front of such TransLites.

The Rosco Mural can be used as background for day and night scenes, and for filming transitions from night to day and day to night. For *Tango*, 15 still photographs were taken of men, women and children, symbolizing the migration to Argentina, in day and night situa-

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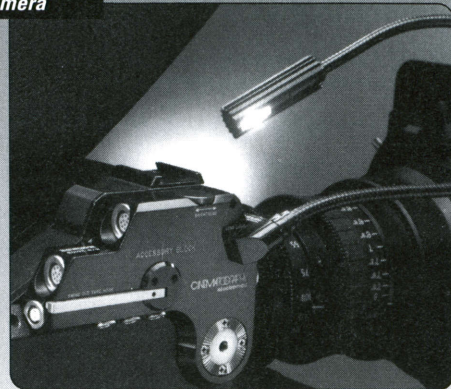
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Guiding Light

Storaro poses with Steadicam inventor Garrett Brown (right) and Brown's son and fellow operator, Jonathan Brown, on the set of Warren Beatty's political comedy *Bulworth* (1998).



tions. The images were scanned into a digital format and composited into a montage by Storaro's son Fabrizio, who used Adobe PhotoShop software and a personal computer. Rosco digitized the photos at film resolution and produced a 90' long x 30' high TransLite. Day, night and transitions at sunrise and dusk were

created with front- and backlighting.

Storaro recently made extraordinary use of the two-way TransLites on *Goya in Bordeaux* and the TV miniseries *Dune*. The directors and actors on these projects responded enthusiastically because the TransLites put them in environments where they could respond more

naturally to motivated light.

Like most cinematographers, Storaro is opposed to panning and scanning. However, unlike anyone else, he has invented an alternative: a universal format called Univisium (see AC Feb. '00). The format uses a standard 35mm 3-perf frame for production. Images are composed in a 2:1 aspect ratio, which he proposes as a universal standard for TV and cinema screens. "I believe it is very important for audiences to see films exactly the way they were composed by the director and cinematographer," he explains. "This is a solution."

Univisium requires some modification of a camera's internal movement and a new 2:1 gate. Clairmont Camera and Technovision have already made these modifications in Arri 435 and 535B cameras. Technicolor Labs in Rome, London and Los Angeles are also supporting the patented Univisium system.

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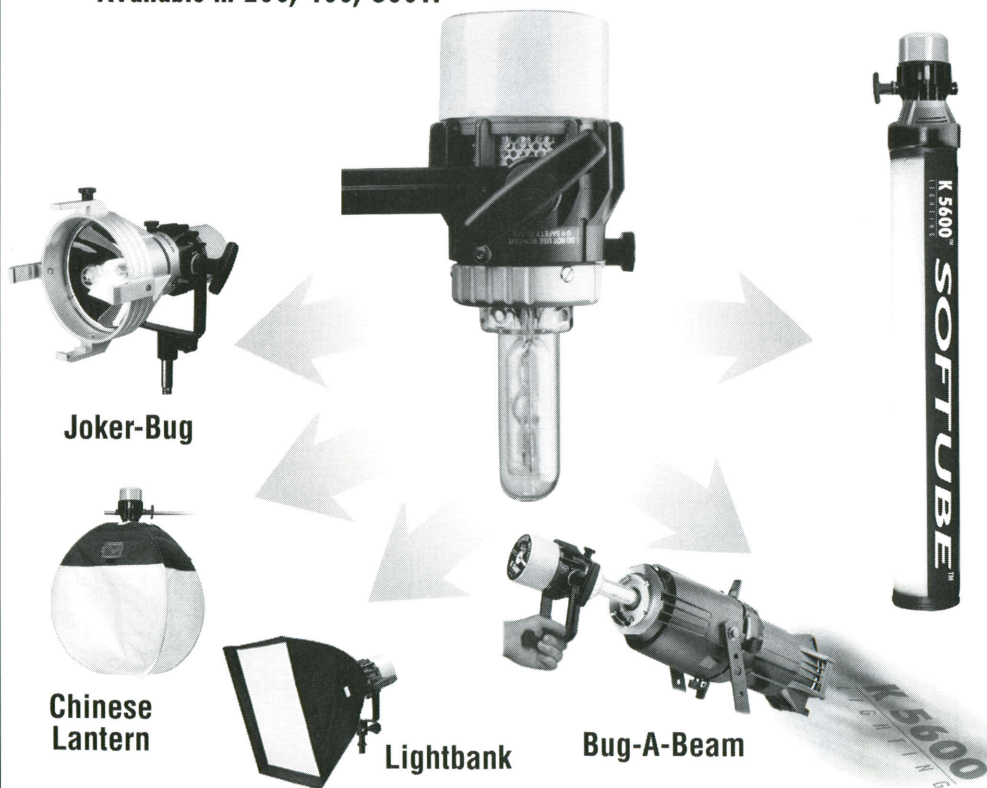
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Univisium also increases the running time of film magazines by 25 percent, thereby reducing the total cost of film, negative-processing, answer-print interpositives and silver master separations by 25 percent. In addition, archiving all elements of a film requires 25 percent less space. Release prints for cinemas can be made in 4-perf 35mm format, or projectors can be inexpensively retrofitted for 3-perf print film without compromising image quality. The latter would trim film-print costs by 25 percent, which would radically alter the financial argument for digital projection.

Univisium could change the future of television. The producers of *Dune* were considering originating in high-definition (HD) 1080 24P format to keep production and visual-effects costs down. Storaro showed them how they could produce the miniseries for the same



On location in Madrid during the production of *Taxi* (1996), Storaro shares a light moment with director Carlos Saura.

budget on a soundstage with film production values by using the Univisium format and TransLites in lieu of digital compositing and a computer-controlled lightboard.

There is a mantra Storaro consistently repeats: "We can never go backwards. We should always move forward and look for ways to

improve the art of making movies. I think of my career as a continuous search for balance and harmony between the opposing elemental forces of life: light and shadows, conscious and unconscious, matter and energy, men and women. Filmmaking is a life-long journey." ■

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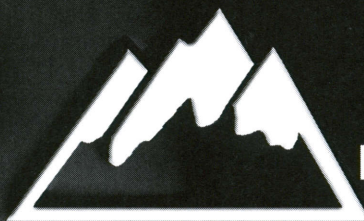
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Shadows of the Psyche



Vittorio Storaro's imagery in *The Conformist* remains a pinnacle of cinematographic panache.

Interview by John Bailey, ASC and Stephen Pizzello

Edited by Stephen Pizzello

Like *Citizen Kane* or *The Godfather*, *The Conformist* (1970) is a milestone in the history of motion-picture photography. The stunning visuals are the result of a true collaboration between two master filmmakers: director Bernardo Bertolucci, who contributed artful compositions and camera movement, and cinematographer Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC, who amplified the story's themes with his exquisite and emotionally eloquent lighting.

Set in Italy during 1938, *The Conformist* focuses on Marcello Clerici (Jean-Louis Trintignant), a Fascist flunky with a psychologically troubling past. During a childhood encounter with a homosexual chauffeur named Lino (Pierre Clémenti), Clerici shoots and seemingly kills the man. Riddled with guilt and terrified that he'll be exposed as a murderer and a homosexual, Clerici strives to escape into complete conformity by

joining the Fascist party and marrying an utterly bourgeois woman (Stefania Sandrelli). When the party asks Clerici to prove his loyalty by killing his former college professor, a political dissident named Quadri (Enzo Tarascio), he is forced to confront both his inner demons and his true nature.

Scripted by Bertolucci from the novel by Alberto Moravia, the film has only gained in stature over the years — particularly among cinematographers, who revere it as one of their art form's towering accomplishments. *AC* recently conducted a roundtable discussion about the film with Vittorio Storaro at the ASC Clubhouse in Hollywood. Heading up the questions were John Bailey, ASC, who cites *The Conformist* as the film that has had the most indelible impact upon his career, and *AC* executive editor Stephen Pizzello. Also on hand for the session were fellow cinematographers Stephen Burum, ASC

and Dante Spinotti, ASC, AIC, as well as *AC* associate editor Doug Bankston. After analyzing *The Conformist*, the group took a brief dinner break to enjoy some exceptional Italian cuisine provided by the L.A. trattoria Farfalla; following dessert, the discussion turned to another of Storaro's best-known films, *Apocalypse Now* (see separate Q & A on page 94).

Stephen Pizzello: Before we start, I'd like to ask John to share some of his thoughts about *The Conformist* and why it's such a seminal film.

John Bailey, ASC: *The Conformist* is an epic film, but in a very intimate and finely faceted way. One of the things that's always amazed me about the picture is that even though it deals with an incredibly turbulent period in Italian and European history — a period of thwarted hopes and cultural disinte-



gration — it is primarily the story of one man in crisis, a man who's trying to find his true identity. In the existential sense, Marcello Clerici is an outsider, and the film is clearly influenced by the philosophies of Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre. Very early on in the film, we see that Clerici comes from a decadent family and is very actively trying to reinvent himself by marrying Giulia, a woman whom he describes as being 'petit bourgeois' and even 'mediocre.'

When you consider a lot of the really great films in the history of cinema, many are about one person, a hero or anti-hero, who's cast against a background of tremendous conflict. In *Lawrence of Arabia* or *Citizen Kane*, for example, we see individuals attempting to define themselves within that type of context.

The narrative structure of *The Conformist* — the way in which the story unfolds — is also fascinating. Back in 1970, although most of us had already seen films by Godard, Renais and other innovative directors, it was still a bit difficult to follow the nonlinear narrative flow of *The Conformist*, with all of the flashbacks within flashbacks. In fact, the film starts at the very end of the story,

with Clerici in the back seat of a car as he's on the way to assassinate his former teacher, Professor Quadri. In the first 20 minutes or so, there are many shots of the driver, Manganiello, while Clerici recalls all of the events from his life that have brought him to this point.

Another thing that I find so striking about the film is that it really exemplifies Vittorio's philosophy of light as a journey of discovery. In *The Conformist*, there's a connection between the human dynamic and the way Vittorio uses light. Light is very often an active element in the narrative — whether it's light and shadows moving up and down a wall; the hanging lamp that swings between Clerici and Manganiello as they talk in the back room of a Chinese restaurant; or the huge spotlights sweeping across the city at the end of the film, when Clerici sets out to meet his friend Italo on a bridge. The use of light is particularly dramatic during a key scene in which Clerici and Professor Quadri meet in the latter's office. The two of them reminisce about a class when Quadri discussed the myth of the cave, in which figures standing in front of a fire can't see reality in front of them, but only the shadows cast on the wall — the simulacrum of reality.

This afternoon I came across a quote from the book *Bernardo Bertolucci* [Oxford University Press, 1985], written by film scholar Robert Phillip Kolker. Although he's referring to the scene in Quadri's office, I think what Kolker says is true of the whole film: '*The Conformist* is a film about lives lived in the shadows — about shadows that seek other shadows.' The play of shadows is a particularly crucial element of the film's visual style, as is the juxtapositioning of shadows and darkness in terms of character and drama.

Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC: You've actually touched upon a key aspect of my relationship with Bernardo Bertolucci — not only

cinematically, but also personally. One day when we were doing *The Spider's Stratagem* [1970], we were filming a sequence in which the main character discovers that his dead father, who has been deified in a small Italian town as an anti-Fascist hero, actually betrayed his friends by telling the police about their plot to kill Mussolini. In a flashback, we see his father's anti-Fascist friends take him to a tower overlooking the city, where they plan to kill him. But in a final attempt to redeem himself, he tells them that they should instead stage his murder in public, in a way that will make it seem as if he was really killed by the Fascists; this will immortalize him as a hero, and ensure that the people of the town will continue to oppose Fascism.

When we arrived at the location in Sabbioneta to shoot the

Opposite page: In Professor Quadri's office, Clerici's inner Fascist appears as a shadow on the wall. This page, left: At the beginning of the office sequence, Clerici (Jean-Louis Trintignant) closes the shutters on one set of windows, permitting a single shaft of light to shine through the second set of windows. The strong beam was created by an arc light positioned on a platform. Below: As the sequence ends, Quadri (Enzo Tarascio) reopens the shutters, obliterating Clerici's shadow.



Shadows of the Psyche



Above: In a striking composition that makes fine use of the surrounding architecture, Clerici awaits Manganiello (Gastone Moschin), who will drive him to the assassination site. Center: Clerici (far left) strides past a hall of windows in a Fascist stronghold. Storaro used light and shadows to construct a "visual cage" around the character. Below: Arriving for his meeting with a Fascist party official, Clerici emerges from behind a curtain. Throughout the film, Storaro and Bertolucci use lighting, composition and blocking to underscore the character's desire to remain hidden.

sequence, I found myself lost technically. We were up on a tower in bright sunlight, and all I had was one Sun Gun to light the actors. I thought that no matter what I did, the scene would look terrible. So I asked myself, 'Why should we see this man? He's becoming a symbol, so why don't we transform him into a silhouette?' Of course, let me be honest here: part of the reason I tried to convince Bernardo to shoot the scene that way was because I had no light! [Laughter.] I told him we could shoot the first part of the scene normally, lighting the actors with the Sun Gun; then, when our protagonist walked toward the sunlit view of the town, we would turn off the light and transform him into a silhouette, in a way that would make our intention for the scene perfectly clear. By shooting the scene that way, I was able to symbolically represent the unconscious of the protagonist, and at the same time visually represent the way Bertolucci is telling the story — from the unconscious side.

Bernardo was so enchanted by the idea that I think it was a big reason that I went on to shoot so many films with him. In every film that he's directed, he's never told the

story in a completely linear or 'conscious' way. Some aspects of the stories are clearly revealed, while others remain hidden. Certain things are merely suggested, so you have to interpret the meanings and read between the lines. The reason for that stems from Bernardo's life; when he was young, he experienced a major crisis that led him into psychoanalysis, and he's never stopped going. As a result, he's very knowledgeable about the human psyche — not only in terms of the technical theories set forth by analysts like Freud and Jung, but also in terms of the inner soul. Because of that, he always needs to tell stories on both the conscious and unconscious levels at the same time.

took the essence from the book and created his own story.

In the film, when Marcello Clerici is a boy at the age of puberty, he has an encounter with a homosexual chauffeur named Lino. He doesn't fully understand what's happening, and at one point he takes a gun and accidentally shoots Lino, who falls on the floor. From that moment on, in his unconscious, Clerici believes that he's a murderer. In addition, he becomes confused about his sexuality, because while Lino is a man, he has an obviously feminine quality. When you're young and something like that happens, you try to hide what you are because you're not ready to face it. And what



Of course, I didn't realize then that this particular shot would create such a link between Bernardo and me. I did the scene that way because I couldn't light it in a normal way, and I had to come up with an idea that I could justify philosophically.

Pizzello: How did you interpret the main theme of *The Conformist* when you discussed the project with Bertolucci?

Storaro: *The Conformist* is a good picture not only because Bernardo is a great director, but because it has its own life — it's not just a literal translation of Alberto Moravia's book. The film's main concept is not actually written in the book, but you can understand this feeling when you read it. Bernardo

is the best way to hide the fact that you're different? To become a conformist — as much like everyone else as possible. That's why Clerici wants to marry the most common woman he can find, someone who's 'all bed and kitchen.' It's also why he always turns his head to look at other women; he wants to be like everybody else, and that's the most common way to be a man. If you take this logic further, what is the best way to be a conformist in 1930s Italy? To be a Fascist. And if you want to hide even more, you become a Fascist operative who tries to inform on the anti-Fascists. Clerici wants to find the darkest corner in which to hide.

One of the film's key moments is when Clerici is visiting his fiancée's





family. Her mother tells him they've received an anonymous letter for him, and he goes pale. He's terrified that they've discovered who he really is, but when the mother reads the letter, it explains only that his father is in the hospital; at that moment, Clerici makes a little gesture of relief that really reveals his character.

Pizzello: What inspired the film's visual design, which makes such extensive, symbolic use of Fascist architecture?

Storaro: At first, Bernardo thought he should hire an older cinematographer to shoot the movie — someone who had actually been making movies during the Fascist era. But when we spoke, he realized that the director would then also have to be from that same period! With the confidence that we were both very familiar with the Fascist era through the movies, we thought we could both approach the topic with new eyes.

Once I was hired, Bernardo showed me *Citizen Kane* [1941], a film that we both loved. We also watched *The Damned* [1969], a wonderful picture directed by Luchino Visconti and shot by Armando Nannuzzi. Afterward, I told Bernardo, 'Those filmmakers did a fantastic job on those pictures, but I think we should find our own way.'

While thinking about *The Conformist*, I felt that there should be no middle ground between Marcello Clerici and his surroundings; I

wanted to create a kind of visual cage around him, using very sharp light and shadows to create a claustrophobic feeling. Although we were shooting our interiors on location because Bernardo loved to work that way, we also felt that we should never see any reality beyond the windows. Therefore, we often worked with venetian blinds and tracing paper to obscure the reality outside.

I wanted this visual cage we were creating to be almost monochromatic — I felt that there shouldn't be any color or passion in Clerici's surroundings. I thought it would be too easy a solution to simply shoot in black-and-white, and that we should find our way in color. We were searching for some way to dramatize color, because at that time everybody thought that color was for comedy, and black-and-white was for drama.

Once Clerici leaves Rome to go on his honeymoon in Ventimiglia and then his mission in Paris, I thought we should open up this visual cage, make the light much more soft, and show more colors. This transition begins with the sequence on the train, where we used rear projection beyond the windows of the passenger car occupied by Clerici and his wife. That journey from Rome to Ventimiglia actually takes half a day, but we show it in two minutes in a series of rear-projection dissolves. The scene progresses from the morning to the afternoon, which

is completely orange, and then to the evening, which is blue.

Later, when the characters are in Paris, you see a complete saturation of this blue color. For Italians of that era, Paris represented freedom, and while I didn't really understand the true meaning of the color blue at that point in my career, I felt that the conflict between natural light and the bluish artificial light at dusk created a vibration that was right for that part of the movie. I told Bernardo that I thought we should do all of our Paris exteriors that way; he liked the idea, but he reminded me that we had to shoot from 9 in the morning to 7 at night. In that regard, my nightmare was the dance sequence at the end of the picture, because the light at that location didn't have the kind of density I needed [throughout the day]. Thank God it was close to

Left: Clerici's "petit bourgeois" wife, Giulia (Stefania Sandrelli), dances seductively amid stripes of light that mimic the pattern on her dress. Storaro maintains that he had never seen the dress before designing the scene's lighting, and that the result was an aesthetically striking coincidence. Below: The youthful Marcello dallies with homosexual chauffeur Lino (Pierre Clémenti), but their playful encounter ends in an accidental shooting that scars Clerici's psyche.



Shadows of the Psyche



Above: Heading toward a Fascist brothel to receive his orders, Clerici seems to blend into a seascape that recalls the work of French painter René Magritte. Below right: In a moment that harks back to his fateful encounter with Lino, Clerici points a gun to his temple. While analyzing the film, John Bailey, ASC noted that the way Clerici stands and gestures "is often very awkward... [he's] like a mannequin who's not completely in control of himself."

Christmas, when it's dark and overcast in Paris. I told the executive producer, Giovanni Bertolucci — Bernardo's cousin — that I needed some neutral gelatin for the windows of the dance hall, but he said it would be too expensive to gel all of those windows. Instead, I asked for only one layer of gelatin that I could pull on and off; I didn't want to change the color of the light, I just wanted to knock the density of the light down. We measured things to find out exactly how many rolls of gel we needed, and I eventually convinced Giovanni that if I had the gel I could shoot more hours! [Chuckling.]

Once we were ready to shoot, I told Bernardo we'd be better off shooting the major part of the sequence after lunch, but he liked to shoot things in order. Thankfully, he worked things out so we could shoot

our smaller shots early in the day, and the bigger ones at 4 in the afternoon.

On *The Conformist*, I didn't have even one day of preproduction, and we were often looking for our locations while we were shooting. In my opinion, however, it's always best to be as well-prepared as possible. Once you have a firm structure in place, you can do little things to enhance the structure if things change on the day when you're shooting. But you should always have that firm structure to fall back on. I've done 44 pictures at this point in my career, and one thing I've learned is that once the actors show up, you start shooting; you don't want to constantly stop to change things, because it breaks the emotional momentum for the actors and everyone else. That's why I love using a dimmer board today; it allows me to make adjustments on the set without consuming too much time.

Bailey: Let's talk about that key scene between Quadri and Clerici in the study, because it's just stunning. After the two men have their discussion about reality and the shadows of reality, Quadri reopens a window that Clerici has shut. Clerici is standing toward the wall with his hand up in a gesture that looks like a Fascist salute, and as the window opens, the shadow image of Clerici is obliterated by the light. In that moment, he becomes a man without an identity.

Storaro: When we were preparing to shoot that scene, Bernardo and I knew that it was a very important moment in the film, so we sat down to discuss it. In a way, Plato's myth of the cave is also the myth of cinema. The figures in the cave are akin to audiences today, the fire behind them is like a movie projector, and the people carrying statues, passing in front of the fire and creating shadows on the wall are like the film itself. It's a perfect metaphor for cinema. Quadri uses this myth to tell Clerici that the

people of Italy are not seeing reality, just the shadows of reality.

When we arrived at the location a day before shooting, we hadn't yet chosen the specific spot where we would stage the scene. In the room we eventually chose, I noticed that there were two windows. I said, 'Bernardo, this is perfect. At the beginning of the scene, we can have both windows open, and then we can have the characters open and close one of them.'

Of course, I then realized that I would need to place a light source outside, and the room was on the second floor of the house. I knew I would need to erect a parallel in the garden of the house next door, so we had to get permission from the lady who lived there. I was praying that she would let us do it, because if she didn't allow us to set up an arc light in her garden, we wouldn't be able to do our scene. Fortunately, she said yes.

Pizzello: What was your thematic motivation for the moment when Manganiello pushes the hanging light toward Clerici in the back room of the Chinese restaurant?

Storaro: That scene was a return to the visual cage we discussed earlier; although the restaurant is in Paris, I wanted that room to confine Clerici in a way that would recall the approach we had used for the sequences set in Rome. While Clerici is trying to hide in the dark corners of this restaurant, Manganiello tips the light to reveal him. Every time the film's plot returned to Clerici's mission, I wanted to place him back in this cage of darkness and light.

Bailey: I'm fascinated by the way Clerici is positioned and framed throughout the film. Graphically and





compositionally, it's clear that he's an outsider. He's constantly shown moving away from the action and the other characters, and the way he stands or gestures is often very awkward — he almost seems like a mannequin who's not completely in control of himself. There's one particularly wonderful shot that occurs just after Clerici walks off an elevator and through a crowd of partygoers. It's very claustrophobic for those few seconds as he passes into the hall; then, when he turns and begins to walk away from the camera, the camera doesn't move with him — instead, it pulls back about five or six feet.

Storaro: Camera movement belongs completely to Bertolucci. From the first time I met Bernardo in the early 1960s, he made it clear that the positioning and movement of the camera was part of his directorial grammar. In Italy at that time, it was also generally accepted that camera movement was the director's responsibility; likewise, it was equally accepted that cinematographers were in charge of the lighting.

It's not always like that with every director, however. Working with Bernardo is the opposite of what it's like working for Francis Coppola, who gives you a great deal of freedom. With Bernardo, you are always free to tell him that you don't completely agree with the camera movement, but when you suggest a new idea, he will never use it directly;

he will always try to find a third solution, and usually it is the best one. Bernardo is a genius with camera movement, and he's probably more aware of the emotional meaning of specific camera moves than most other directors; therefore, when it comes to camera moves, he prefers to find his own solutions — although he always asks for my opinion.

Bailey: Maybe so, but I've always noticed a distinct difference in the camera style of the films he's shot with you, as opposed to those he's done with other cinematographers.

Storaro: Bernardo was never like other directors, who were simply showing reality in a straightforward way. But at a certain point in Bernardo's career, various critics were accusing him of being too unusual, too unpredictable, too elegant, too refined. Unfortunately, those criticisms had an effect on him. On *Luna*, I remember him telling me, 'Vittorio, I'd like to see completely into the shadows.' He was pushing me to shoot things in a more conscious, straightforward way, which really went against his own artistic philosophy. I always rejected those ideas, and I often fought with him when he wanted everything to be perfectly lit, or perfectly in focus.

Bailey: One shot I particularly love in *The Conformist* occurs during the sequence in Ventimiglia, when Clerici goes to a Fascist brothel to get his orders for Paris. He arrives in a horse-drawn carriage, and the

camera pans left to right toward a building on the seashore, near a promenade that leads to a boat. In the middle of this pan, the camera stops on a painting of this seascape that's resting on an easel. The painting fills the frame, and then there's a dissolve to the real scene behind it.

Storaro: That sequence was inspired by Bernardo's deep appreciation of the French painter René Magritte. When we were working on *The Spider's Stratagem*, he told me he loved Magritte's paintings because they hinted at a life and a universe beyond our own.

For the scene within the brothel, where Clerici is told that he must kill Professor Quadri, we knew we had to do something special. I thought of this beautiful church I had visited in Ravenna that was covered in alabaster, and I decided to surround Clerici with orange, translucent glass.

However, when we finally shot the main scene, in which Clerici receives the pistol with which he is to kill his teacher, I made one of the worst mistakes of my career. I had prepared that room exactly like any other part of the brothel, with tracing paper on the windows and the light coming through. As we did the scene, I realized that the lighting was completely wrong from a philosophical perspective, but I didn't have the courage to tell everyone to stop what they were doing. That was the only scene from my career that I would like to reshoot, because I don't think the lighting creates the kind of tension that the scene needs.

Left: During their honeymoon trip from Rome to Ventimiglia, Clerici and his new wife share a moment of passion in their train compartment. In this scene, Storaro decided to use softer lighting and an infusion of color to "open up the visual cage" that he had built around Clerici. This objective was partially accomplished through the use of lush, scenic rear-projection plates, which also served to compress the half-day journey into two minutes. Below: "Please don't hurt us, Marcello." Amid a moody blue ambience, Quadri's wife, Anna (Dominique Sanda), implores Clerici to abandon his murderous mission.



Shadows of the Psyche



Above: In the back room of a Chinese restaurant, Manganiello corners Clerici, who is exposed by a swinging lamp. Below: At the edge of a secluded forest, Fascist assassins plunge their knives into Quadri; moments later, the dead professor's wife confronts an impassive Clerici.

Bailey: Well, I think you're being a bit harsh on yourself, Vittorio, because that scene is still very effective. Another of the film's memorable setpieces is the scene in which Clerici's wife dances in their apartment while wearing a striped dress that matches the stripes of light on the walls — a pattern created by the venetian blinds on the windows.

Storaro: I had just begun working on *The Conformist* when I went to see the house where that scene would be shot. When I had read that scene in the script, I got an idea about how to light it, but when we were actually on the set, I only had one arc light. I was begging Giovanni Bertolucci to give me two more arcs, because I was dealing with three windows, but he only got me one more light — for just two days!

Furthermore, the very first time I met the production designer, Ferdinando Scarfiotti, was when we were preparing to shoot that scene! He showed up the following Monday with the striped dress for actress Stefania Sandrelli to wear, so the matching of the lighting and the dress happened purely by accident!

Bailey: Near the end of the movie, Clerici falls asleep in the car as he and Manganiello get closer to the site where they're going to kill Quadri. When he wakes up, he tells Manganiello that he's had a dream that he was blind, and that Quadri appeared as a surgeon who restored his sight. In a sense, he's going to kill the one man who could lead him out of the blindness of his own life and toward some kind of understanding.

Earlier in the film, we've also encountered Clerici's friend Italo, who is a blind poet. So there's this theme of the characters being blind that's both literal and metaphorical.

Storaro: The dream is certainly part of the analysis of Marcello Clerici, and it relates back to Quadri's discussion of Plato's myth. In discussing the figures before the fire, Plato is trying to tell people to wake up to reality. They don't want to listen, though, and instead they kill him. So after his discussion with Clerici, Professor Quadri realizes that his former student has been hired to kill him. Like Plato, Quadri is revealing a truth that the people don't want to hear or understand.

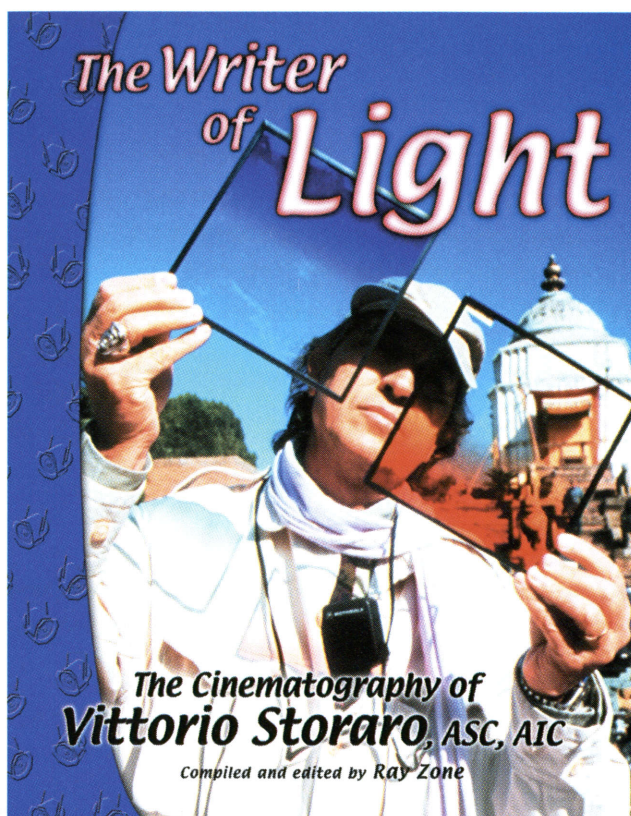
After that scene, there's a moment between Clerici and Quadri's wife when she offers him her body and says, 'Please don't hurt us, Marcello.' She also knows what he's up to, and as she approaches him and undresses herself, the room turns a very deep indigo. At her core,

Quadri's wife is very much like Clerici, and she understands his motivations.

Bailey: Let's go back to the issue of camera movement. Throughout most of the film, the moves are very restrained and tightly controlled. However, in the scene just after Quadri is murdered, when the killers are chasing his wife through the woods, you employ a very frantic handheld camera. I thought that change of tactics was just brilliant.

Storaro: Before we shot that scene, we were told that there was a storm coming, and that we would have to finish in one day. We had already decided to shoot the sequence in a very violent way, with the camera behind actress Dominique Sanda, but I had no idea that the work would be so complex and physically demanding. I operated a handheld Arri 2-C myself, and Enrico Umetelli was operating another camera that was set up further away with a telephoto lens.





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Shadows of the Psyche



Within the Teatro Marcello, Clerici discovers that Lino — the source of his lifelong neurosis — isn't dead after all.

We were originally supposed to shoot *The Conformist* with the new Mitchell Mark V, but it wasn't ready in time. For the scene in the woods, I used a very small magazine to keep the camera's weight as light as possible, but I couldn't always keep my eye to the viewfinder while I was running — the camera was shaking too much. I was pressing the eyepiece against my shoulder so no light would go through it, and adjusting the camera as I ran after Dominique. As I followed her, three of the men playing the killers gradually ran past

me in a line; the last man then tossed a gun to the man in front of him, and I followed the weapon as it passed from man to man until the lead killer finally reached Dominique. She had a little device in her hand so she could rub fake blood on her face when they finally shot her, and after that I followed her as she staggered from tree to tree.

Believe me, at that point I was staggering around, too! I could barely catch my breath, and I thought I was going to die from the physical exertion — you need to do some training before you try to film something like that!

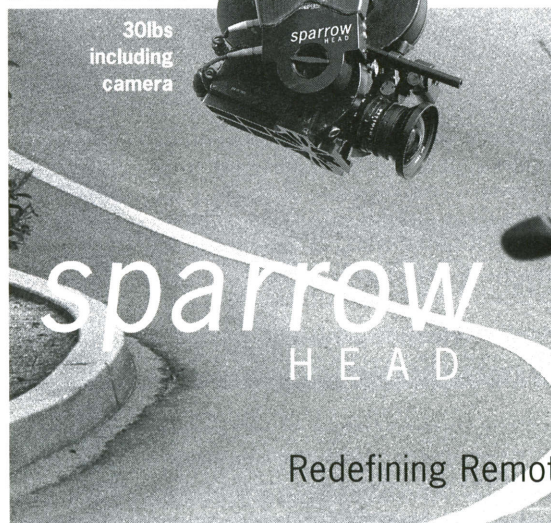
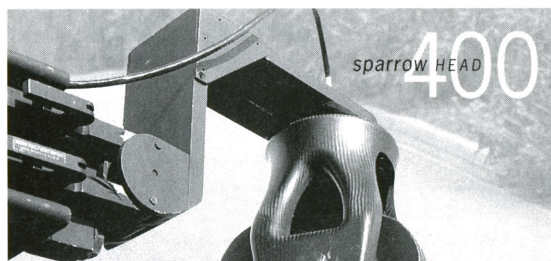
In those days, we didn't have any Steadicam, and the real problem was that I couldn't see through the camera. After the first take, Bernardo asked me if I'd gotten the shot, and I told him I wasn't sure. So of course we had to do it again — after I had rested for about 10 or 15 minutes!

The second time we did it, I felt a bit better, and I think we wound up doing three takes. We finished the last one at the end of the day, and right after we got the equipment back to the cars, the storm arrived.

While we were driving away, I was so high from all of the physical exertion, and so excited to have personally experienced such an emotional sequence, that I didn't even care if I'd gotten the shot on film or not! It was an absolutely amazing sensation.

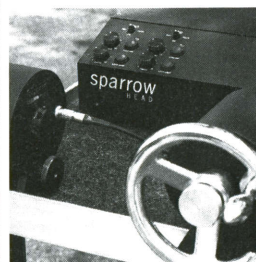
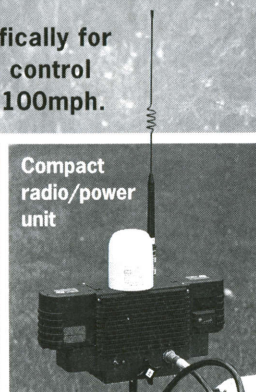
Bailey: At the very end of the film, Clerici comes face to face with Lino, the homosexual chauffeur whom he mistakenly believed he had killed during his childhood. When he realizes who this man is, he begins loudly denouncing him as a homosexual, a Fascist, a murderer — he basically blames Lino for everything he himself has done.

Storaro: Yes, for Clerici that is



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the moment of catharsis. When he discovers that Lino is alive, he realizes that he's not an assassin after all, and he finally accepts the fact that he's different not because he's an assassin, but because he's a homosexual. He's completed the journey within himself, and in that moment, he throws all of his [psychological baggage] onto Lino.

Bailey: The lighting during the film's finale really captures the emotional shift that's taking place within Clerici.

Storaro: In that sequence, there's a beam of light that follows Clerici through the street, and when he comes upon Lino, the beam stops on the two of them for awhile. A short time later, this group of people comes along like a river to sweep everything away, including Clerici's blind friend Italo.

When we were preparing to do the very last shot in the film at the

Teatro Marcello, I wasn't sure how I was going to light it. I had the crew set up various lighting units, and then I took a walk to smoke a cigarette. While I was walking, I thought about how the incredible journey of this character was going to end during this shot. As I began wondering how I could convey this key moment visually, all of these crew members were bustling around in total chaos. Then, suddenly, I wasn't hearing the crew noise anymore, and I could instead make out the sound of these birds chirping across the nearby river. At that moment, when I heard the sounds of nature amid this incredible chaos, I knew that I had to turn off every light. We wound up doing the scene with just a bit of firelight on Clerici's face.

Bailey: That sequence is wonderfully ambiguous, because you first show the backside of a male prostitute before cutting in to a tight



shot of Clerici looking almost directly into the camera. You do get the strong feeling that he's come full circle.

Pizzello: Vittorio, before we move on to *Apocalypse Now*, can you tell us what kind of impact *The Conformist* had upon your career?

Storaro: Well, the reason that Francis Coppola asked me to shoot *Apocalypse Now* — my first American picture — was that he loved *The Conformist*. So in a way, *The Conformist* was my passport to *Apocalypse*, and all of the films I've done since then. ■

After experiencing a creative epiphany amid the chaos of production, Storaro opted to illuminate the film's final shot simply and poetically, using just a touch of flickering firelight on Clerici's face.

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A Clash of Two Cultures

Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC recalls the photographic challenges he confronted during the tumultuous production of Francis Ford Coppola's hallucinatory Vietnam War epic *Apocalypse Now*.

Interview by Stephen Burum, ASC
and Stephen Pizzello

Edited by Stephen Pizzello

Unit photography by Josh Weiner

After a grueling 15-month shoot in the Philippines, *Apocalypse Now* was finally released on August 15, 1979. At the time, critics were sharply divided in their assessments of the film, but Francis Coppola's visionary Vietnam War epic is now regarded as a modern classic. The film's spectacular images earned Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC his first Academy Award and cemented his reputation as one of the world's most brilliant and innovative cinematographers.

Storaro's philosophical approach to the picture incorporated the careful use of deeply saturated colors, silhouettes and artificial light sources that selectively pierced the darkness of the story's jungle



settings. He further enhanced the film's dramatic look by flashing the negative. The result was an immersive experience that took viewers on a surrealistic and hallucinatory upriver journey through an array of wartime horrors.

What follows are some fascinating excerpts from a roundtable discussion held at the ASC Clubhouse, during which Storaro responded to questions posed by Stephen Burum, ASC, who supervised the second-unit cinematogra-

Photos courtesy of American Zoetrope.

phy on *Apocalypse Now*, and AC executive editor Stephen Pizzello. Also participating in the discussion were cinematographers John Bailey, ASC and Dante Spinotti, ASC, AIC, as well as AC associate editor Doug Bankston.

Stephen Pizzello: Vittorio, before I turn the floor over to Mr. Burum, I'd like to ask how you got the assignment to shoot *Apocalypse Now*, which was your first collaboration with Francis Coppola.

Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC: Actually, I initially refused to shoot the picture, because I didn't want to interfere in the relationship between Francis and Gordon Willis [ASC]. They'd done such wonderful work on the *Godfather* films that I thought it would be wrong for someone else to shoot *Apocalypse*. But when I spoke with Gordon about it, he assured me that he was not a part of the project, even though there was nothing wrong between him and Francis.

Ironically enough, around the same day that [*Apocalypse* co-producer] Fred Roos came to Rome to speak with me about the picture, I met with Alejandro Jodorowsky; he was planning to direct *Dune*, and he offered me the chance to shoot it. I loved Frank Herbert's book, and at that time I thought *Apocalypse Now* was just another war picture. To Italians in the year 1975, the topic of the Vietnam War was not that compelling, because it was so far away from us. But Francis told me, 'Read Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, because I took some of the spirit of *Apocalypse* from that book.' When I read it, I understood that the main theme of the story was the superimposition of one culture on top of another culture. I realized that the darkness mentioned in the book's title did not belong to the jungle culture, but to the supposedly 'civilized' culture that was making its way up the river. That idea became

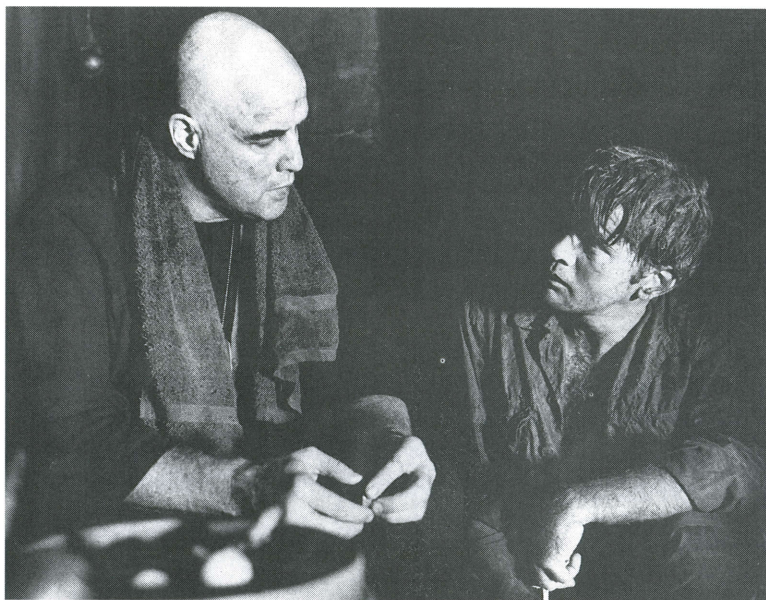
very interesting to me, and I ultimately accepted the job.

Pizzello: Steve, can you tell us how you came to serve as second-unit cinematographer on *Apocalypse*?

Stephen Burum, ASC: I'd been trying to get into the union for 13 years, and I got my chance by shooting television. I'd been doing that for about two years when I got a call from Fred Roos, who told me, 'Francis wanted me to ask if you'd come to the Philippines to shoot second-unit footage for *Apocalypse*.' I'd been reading in the papers that the production had been shut down because a terrible typhoon had destroyed the sets, but I said, 'Well,

operating the camera for me. Vittorio then said to me, 'I want you to watch me shoot two scenes before you do anything.' So first, I watched Vittorio shoot [the military briefing] involving Martin Sheen, G.D. Spradlin, Harrison Ford and Jerry Ziesmer. Then I watched the filming of the picture's opening sequence in the hotel room, when Willard is horribly drunk.

I was looking very carefully at what Vittorio was doing, because I knew I had to duplicate exactly what he was doing not only technically, but spiritually. I'd gone to school [at UCLA] with Francis, so I understood how he thought, but I didn't yet



sure.' I went to an office at Samuel Goldwyn to talk to Francis, and he wanted to discuss the aerial footage. When I asked him who was going to direct those scenes, he said, 'You will.' I suggested that maybe [director] Carroll Ballard should supervise those scenes with me shooting them, but Francis replied, 'Carroll told me that you should do it.' [Laughs.]

I agreed to head up the second unit, so about a month later I got on a plane and flew to the Philippines. About a day and a half after I got there, I met Vittorio, who introduced me to Piero Servo, who would be

understand how Vittorio thought, and it was very interesting to observe the way in which he used the light. Coming from the industry in Los Angeles, I was used to having all of this equipment; we had more gadgets and tools than anybody else in the world. Vittorio, on the other hand, was just using Brute arcs and Photofloods with blue gels on them. In the hotel room, he had two arcs coming in through the windows and a little cluster of lights bouncing up on the ceiling to provide a bit of fill. Then, back in this dark corner, he had a lamp on with a lampshade over

Opposite page: Kurtz's minions, backed by a garrulous photojournalist (Dennis Hopper), await Willard and his men as they disembark from their patrol boat. Storaro's surrealistic treatment of the jungle scenes was partially inspired by the art of Burne Hogarth, whose bold use of color brought the *Tarzan* comic strip to vivid life during the late 1930s. This page: Within the shadowy interior of his jungle temple, Colonel Kurtz (Marlon Brando) outlines his worldview for Captain Willard (Martin Sheen). Storaro explains that "Colonel Kurtz represents the unconscious, which we all have inside of us. He represents the dark side of the United States, which is why black is such an important color in the film."

A Clash of Two Cultures

Right: "Charlie don't surf!" Despite heavy enemy fire, a group of U.S. soldiers prepares to hang ten. Storaro says that the key concept behind his photographic approach was the notion of "one culture superimposing itself on another." As a result, *Apocalypse Now* is rife with moments in which the American way of life clashes with the harsh realities of Vietnam.

Below: Storaro (kneeling at center) and his crew line up two cameras on location in the Philippines. Flanking Storaro, from the left, are camera assistant Rino Bernardini, operator Enrico Umetelli and camera assistant Mauro Marchetti. In the background, Francis Coppola (seated) chats with assistant director Jerry Ziesmer (white shirt) as Dennis Hopper (in camouflage pants) finds his motivation for the scene.



it. By doing that, he made the black in the corner look better, because he had that bright reference in the frame. He also had this elaborate system of cutting pieces of paper or gels for the shades in order to block out the light coming toward the camera, and have as much of it as possible hitting the wall instead.

From watching all of this activity on the sets, I immediately understood that the color black was very important to Vittorio. About two days after watching those scenes, we started working out this big sequence set at the Do Lung Bridge. [Special-effects coordinator] Joe

Lombardi was going to demonstrate these parachute flares; he was planning to shoot them into the air, where they would hang and light up a whole, huge area. Well, the flares didn't work, because the air was so humid that they wouldn't even burn. Vittorio's solution was to really use the black areas [of the scene] and the highlights provided by the arc lights and Photofloods that we *did* use in the scene.

Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC:

That sequence at the Do Lung Bridge really demonstrates the main photographic concept for *Apocalypse Now*, which sprang directly from this idea I

mentioned of one culture superimposing itself on another. Every country that has ever conquered another country — whether you're talking about Egypt, Italy, Spain, France, England or the United States — has always imposed its own language and culture upon the conquered region. Everyone from these conquering countries always believes that they're only exporting the good aspects of their culture, but that's simply not true. Everyone has a good side and a bad side — a conscious and an unconscious. America was the same way in Vietnam, and in *Apocalypse Now*, Colonel Kurtz represents the unconscious, which we all have inside of us. He represents the dark side of the United States, which is why black is such an important color in the film.

When I was planning the visual strategy for the film, I began thinking that I could convey the conflict of cultures by creating a visual conflict between artificial light and natural light. The first time I saw that we would be using colored smoke to convey specific military messages, I thought it was wonderful, because when these artificial colors were placed next to the natural colors of Vietnam, it created that sense of conflict that I wanted.

I also sought to create that type of conflict in the lighting. For example, consider the scene in which the Playboy girls put on their show in the middle of the jungle. The lighting I used for that scene came about for two reasons. First, at that point in my career, I had never used a really extensive lighting package; the biggest picture I had ever done was *1900*, on which I'd used a single thousand-amp generator! When I arrived to do *Apocalypse Now*, I brought just *one* thousand-amp generator, without any backup — that's how crazy I was! Given the relatively low budgets that I'd had, I was accustomed to simply using the minimum lighting I required. To





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A Clash of Two Cultures

Playboy bunnies descend from the heavens in one of Hugh Hefner's corporate choppers. After he realized that lighting the sequence from beyond the stage area was impossible, Storaro opted to pierce the nighttime darkness with Photofloods built into the set by production designer Dean Tavoularis. He reasoned that this approach would "create this intrusion of artificial light in the jungle — the incredible force of the light would serve to enhance the blackness of the jungle."

light that huge Playboy sequence from beyond the stage area was basically impossible, so instead I came up with the idea of using lights set up *within* the stage area. I asked the production designer, Dean Tavoularis, to design a set that would incorporate a number of Photofloods. However, the second reason for doing the scene that way was that I wanted to create this intrusion of artificial light in the jungle — the incredible force of the light would serve to enhance the blackness of the jungle.

The same idea applied to the sequence at Do Lung Bridge. When Francis showed me his idea for the scene — which involved panning from the patrol boat to the bridge, at

Burum: I find it interesting that you were able to take those technical limitations and use them to create a distinctive visual style.

Storaro: In my mind, the different scenes in the film became like parts of a puzzle. We would only show certain things amid all of the darkness, and we would reveal different pieces of the puzzle as we went further up the river.

Burum: Exactly. If you'd shown the whole jungle, it wouldn't have been as effective.

Storaro: In Italy, we have a saying: 'When the wolf is hungry, he will come out of his cave.' In other words, necessity will force you to come up with an idea! Back in those

were scheduled.

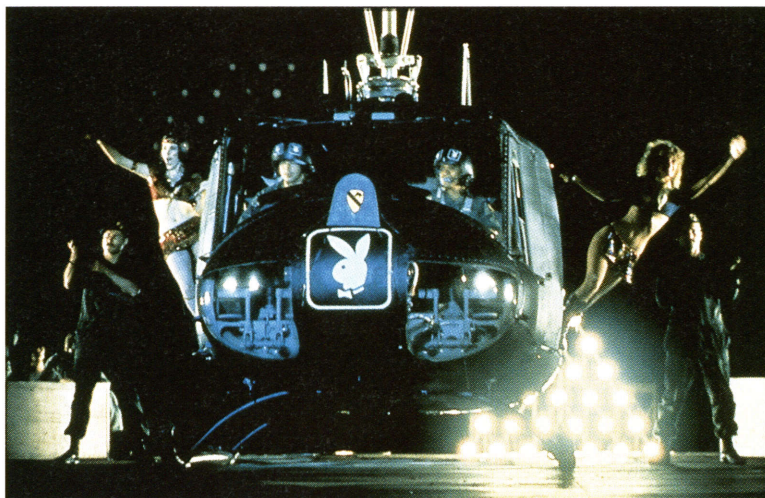
Burum: Don't you think that in some ways, you have more of an impact on the audience when you work with limited technical resources? You don't have a safety net, so you have to present a vision that comes from your heart.

Storaro: No doubt. When you're in that type of situation, you must push yourself a bit more and be very creative. You also have to think things through really carefully. Even now, when I have all of the time, money and equipment that I need, I always try to employ that type of creative approach. Sometimes, I have to fight with the director or the editor if they push me to get coverage 'just in case.' In case of what? In case our plan is no good? That way of working costs the film industry a lot of money, and it drains the quality of the filmmaking.

Today, unfortunately, editors are used to working on the Avid system or something similar. They have a very small screen in front of them, and it's very hard to see an emotion from an actor, or a particular action. On some pictures, they don't even print dailies anymore, so editors can't even double-check footage on the big screen to make sure that the cuts, the rhythms or the emotions are right. They work only from a small monitor, so they're probably editing the picture with television in mind, at least subconsciously. That's the worst thing you can do to the film industry, because you're reducing everything to video quality. Digital technology is a great tool, but in my opinion everyone should be able to look at their footage on big video projectors, or at least a large, television-sized monitor.

Pizzello: Which camera and lenses did you use on *Apocalypse Now*?

Storaro: We shot the film with Mitchell reflex cameras, which were modified by [the Italian company] Technovision to accept Cooke



night, on a river in the middle of the jungle — I thought to myself, 'How in the world am I going to light such a huge amount of space with just one thousand-amp generator?!' My solution was to have the crew erect several towers, each of which had one arc on it. We had an electrician on each tower, and I would talk to them by walkie-talkie and tell them where to aim the light. I also remember asking Joe Lombardi to create some explosions in spots where I needed some light. If you watch the scene, during the huge pan above the bridge, you can see only the silhouettes of the two main characters against this explosion beyond them.

days, the Italian film industry didn't have much money, so we did everything with very low budgets. In that regard, *1900* was really an exception; when I did *The Spider's Stratagem*, we had no generator at all! On all of those pictures, I really had to work out the visual strategies with the director, because we couldn't afford to do a master shot, an over-the-shoulder and then a close-up; that approach took too much time and money. We really had to have a good plan, because we knew we'd only have one chance to shoot each sequence. We could do multiple takes, of course, but we had to get the scenes right on the days when they

Hobson Taylor anamorphic lenses from England.

Because the Italian film industry was so poor at the time, we could not afford Panavision equipment, and the only serious company over there was Technovision. I developed a really strong relationship with Henryk Chrosicki, who unfortunately died last spring. No matter what I needed, he was always ready to make any changes or adjustments to the camera.

Burum: We had the most wonderful Cooke anamorphic zoom lens on *Apocalypse*. It converted by just unscrewing the back and screwing on the anamorphic [attachment]. It was one of the best anamorphic lenses I've ever seen or used, and Francis eventually bought it.

Vittorio, let's talk a bit about the way Francis handles people, because he does it in a very interesting way. When I got to the Philippines, I went into his office, and he said, 'Steve, I'm in so much trouble now that the only way we can get out of this is to do everything perfectly.' I answered, 'Francis, I've been waiting all my life to hear someone say that to me. We'll do it.' I walked out of that office, down those stairs, and back to my hotel, and all the way I was thinking to myself, 'This is going to be great.' Then all of a sudden, I began asking myself, 'What is perfect? What am I going to do?' I sometimes wound up sitting on the riverbank for three days to get a shot, because Francis had told me not to shoot anything unless it was perfect!

Storaro: On any picture, when you meet the director for the first time, you have to have a very strong connection in order to share a truly spiritual collaboration. Going back to my meeting about *Dune* with Alejandro Jodorowsky, I remember that the tone of it was quite cold. I knew he had a reputation for doing everything on his pictures, including the cinematography, so I asked him

why he had called me. And he answered, 'I know that on this movie, I need much more in terms of the operating and the lighting, and I think that you can do better.' But I couldn't tell if he was being sincere with me or not, which made me a bit hesitant.

On a picture like *Apocalypse Now*, you know right away that it's going to be a long, expensive, dangerous shoot in a location that's very far away. But from our very first meeting, Francis was so friendly that I felt as if I'd known him forever. In the professional sense, he also made me feel totally comfortable. He told me that he had admired my work on *The Conformist*, and he never let me feel that I was out of place, or too young, or that I didn't know enough English. *Apocalypse* became my first picture outside of Italy with a foreign production company, because prior to meeting Francis, I'd never felt comfortable with any of the other foreign directors I'd met.

When I arrived in the Philippines, he wanted to show me some color sketches of the helicopter attack sequence — Francis had actually filmed these sketches in CinemaScope and edited them together with music, and he showed me this footage on a big screen! The camera operator, Enrico Umetelli, was sitting next to me, and Francis told us, 'Remember, this is just a rough idea for the sequence; we're going to do it much better when we really shoot it.' I watched that footage with my mouth open, and I whispered to Enrico, 'Do you think we'll be able to do that!?' I thought there was no way I could meet those expectations, but I think Francis picked up on my concern, and he was very reassuring. Without his energy, we never would have been able to make *Apocalypse Now*.

Burum: I do remember that when I got to the Philippines, there was a general feeling that *Apocalypse* was going to be a great picture. I

don't think anybody on the crew doubted that. I don't think anybody knew how we were going to achieve that greatness, but there was definitely a sense that we were doing the best work we could do. To me, the whole project had an aura about it.

Storaro: Honestly, I never thought it would be great, because I was so scared to be working at that level! But Francis told me, 'Vittorio, this is the first picture that I've really produced completely. I have total control, but I also have total responsibility. I have complete trust in your expertise with the camera, so please feel free to do anything you think is correct. We don't need any go-ahead from anybody else, but please remember that all of the responsibility is on me personally.' I always take my work very seriously, but after Francis said that to me, I really tried to give a maximum effort with the minimum equipment that I needed.

Burum: The way Francis handles everyone on a set is worth discussing. For example, when I was shooting *The Outsiders* and *Rumble Fish*, he'd show me the scene and ask, 'What do you want to do?' I'd tell him, 'Well, we should do this, this and this.' If he liked what I said, he'd reply, 'Okay, where do you want to start?' If he didn't like what I was saying, he'd tell me some allegorical story! [Laughs.] At that point, I'd know enough to offer him an alternative, and he'd say, 'I think that's better.' But he always made me feel that I was really contributing, and that he valued my input. That type of director really knows how to get the best out of people.

Storaro: Francis is, without a doubt, the director who gave me the most freedom to express myself. But at the same time, he was also very clear about the main concepts for the film.

The first day of any shoot is when you really begin to discover your relationship with a director, and what your contribution will be. On

A Clash of Two Cultures

Willard's patrol boat glides into the Kurtz compound. The temple set was built with real stone, and the filmmakers used both explosives and heavy-duty tractors to destroy it for a spectacular sequence that only appeared over the end credits of the initial 35mm release prints.

When the controversial sequence caused rampant speculation about the film's denouement, Coppola had it excised from subsequent prints. He later explained that the scene subverted his desire to end the film on a hopeful note.

the first day of *Apocalypse*, Francis gave me an anamorphic viewfinder with my name on it, and he had one of his own. We were in this bar, preparing to shoot a scene that is no longer in the picture with Harvey Keitel, who was originally hired to play Martin Sheen's part. We were both wandering around with these finders, and it probably looked a bit ridiculous. But he took me aside and told me his concept for that scene, and every morning after that, he would tell me his main idea for that day's work, usually addressing things on a metaphorical level. I would then try to use my knowledge to figure out

friend of mine wanted to do a movie about Tarzan. Unfortunately, that film was never made, but my friend showed me a book by a great illustrator named Burne Hogarth, who had drawn the *Tarzan* comic strip [in the 1930s and '40s]. In 1972, just before we began working on *Apocalypse*, Hogarth had published two new books of his Tarzan art [*Tarzan of the Apes* and *Jungle Tales of Tarzan*], and they really focused on the principles of movement. I think Hogarth was very aware of an Italian style of painting known as Futurism, which is exemplified by the work of Giacomo Balla and Umberto

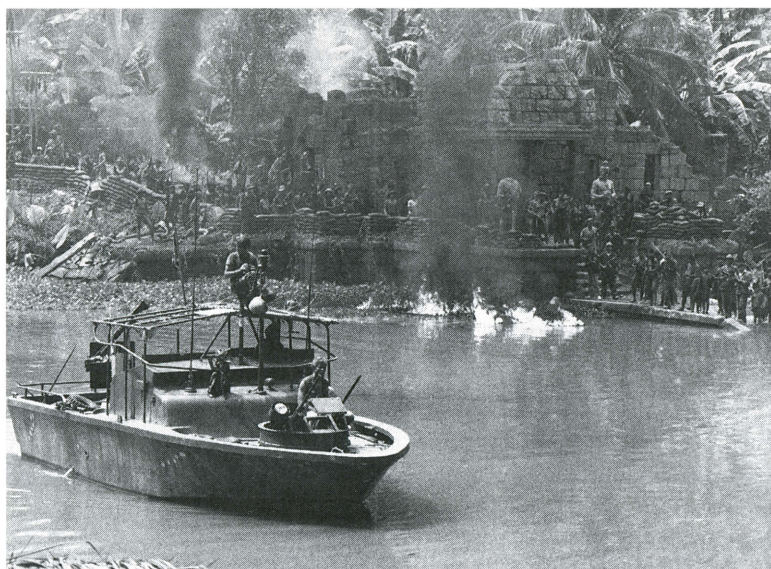
the images in Hogarth's books, and I showed them to Francis during our early meetings. I told him that I wanted to portray the jungle in a similar way, with very aggressive colors. That style is really apparent in the sequence where the tiger jumps out at Martin Sheen and Frederic Forrest; I didn't want the color of the jungle to be a naturalistic color. Francis and I were very much in sync on that concept; whenever he talked to me about the helicopter attack, the Do Lung Bridge sequence, or the explosion of the Kurtz compound, he would always say, 'Vittorio, I don't want to do something realistic. I want to create a big show, something that's magnificent to see. Everywhere Americans go, they make a great show of things, and I want to create a conflict between beauty and horror.'

That approach is completely apparent in the Wagnerian helicopter attack and the subsequent scene in which Robert Duvall's character says, 'I love the smell of napalm in the morning. It smells like ... victory.' It doesn't matter to him how many people are dying; he's somehow enchanted by the beauty of napalm. This is the point of view that Kurtz is denouncing.

Pizzello: Was your use of dramatic silhouettes in the film also inspired by comic-book art?

Storaro: Yes. In that regard, Burne Hogarth was really my guide. However, the silhouettes were also inspired by the French naive painter Henri Rousseau. He did some paintings set in the jungle that had very aggressive colors, and in one that I remember there was a man in silhouette with a woman and a tiger behind him.

Burum: While I was shooting pass-bys of the patrol boat, Vittorio said to me, 'We should see nature before we see man.' I would therefore compose those shots so that the boat was hidden in silhouette, and the first thing you saw was the wake of the boat — this little silver ripple. When



how to achieve those concepts technically. I would present my ideas, and if he didn't think they would work, I would come up with something else. But once he was sure that I had come up with the best way to translate his concept onto film, he would give me total freedom to put together the entire sequence. He would sometimes make a few little changes to our plan while we were shooting, but usually we wouldn't deviate much from that initial plan we had worked out in the morning.

Pizzello: What were some of your visual influences for the film?

Storaro: Just before I started *Apocalypse*, a very good filmmaker

Boccioni. The main aesthetic principles of Futurism are beauty and speed; Balla, for example, painted things like dogs with eight legs, in order to show their speed in one single image. A lot of comic-strip art was also influenced by studies done during the Italian Renaissance, particularly those by Michelangelo, who portrayed figures in a way that was very much like sculpture. The physical action of Tarzan in Hogarth's art was unbelievably dynamic, and every color in the drawings was so strong and saturated that the overall impact became very surrealistic.

I became very fascinated with

the ripple broke the surface of the water, it symbolized man disturbing the natural environment.

Storaro: We always strove to show the conflict between the soldiers and both the jungle and the native people. That concept is conveyed very well in the shot where Martin Sheen is in the boat examining the confidential dossier about Kurtz. Larry Fishburne is dancing to the Rolling Stones song "Satisfaction" on the radio, and Sam Bottoms is surfing behind the boat. As he's surfing, he's spraying water on the natives, which reinforces that idea that the Americans are imposing themselves upon this culture in a rather arrogant manner.

To me, the most important and powerful moment in the movie occurs just before the helicopter attack on the village, right after Colonel Kilgore turns on the Wagner music. We suddenly cut to a quiet shot of a teacher leading this group of children out of their school, and as a viewer you say to yourself, 'Oh my God, are they going to attack those little children?' In most previous war movies, you always saw the cavalry arriving to save the day by attacking the bad guys.

Pizzello: Let's talk a bit about the explosion of the Kurtz compound, which was only shown over the end credits of the initial 35mm release prints. That footage never appeared in the 70mm prints, and Mr. Coppola has acknowledged that its inclusion in the 35mm credits caused some confusion about the film's ending.

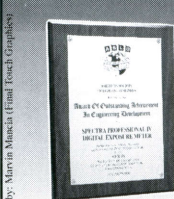
Burum: Everybody tried to make a big deal out of that footage, but the only reason Francis included it in the 35mm prints was because Joe Lombardi got really upset when it was removed from the original cut. Francis arranged this work-in-progress screening for the cast and crew at the Bruin Theater in Westwood, and when it was over, Joe grabbed Francis in the lobby and jumped all over him: 'Dammit, I had

GO WITH THE WINNER!

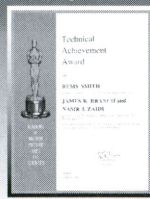
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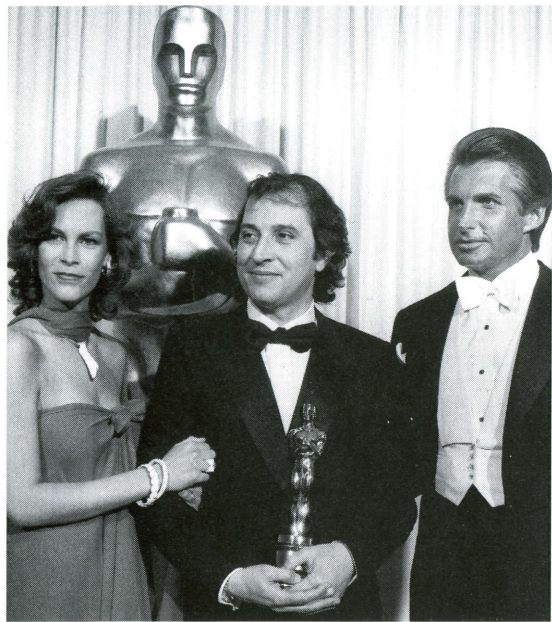


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A Clash of Two Cultures



Storaro is flanked by presenters Jamie Lee Curtis and George Hamilton at the 1980 Academy Awards ceremony, where the cinematographer's spectacular work on *Apocalypse Now* earned him his first Oscar.

my effects guys all over the jungle to shoot that scene!' So in order to placate Joe, Francis put the footage over the credits, which led to all of this speculation about the film's ending.

Of course, that footage was definitely a challenge to shoot. What do you remember about working on that sequence, Vittorio?

Storaro: It took nine nights to shoot that scene, and we set up about 10 cameras — a VistaVision camera, an infrared camera, a high-speed camera and normal cameras. Before we began shooting, I had constant nightmares that someone was going to get hurt. I kept asking Joe where we should put the crew members and the cameras to keep them safe, and at first, he couldn't say for sure — the temple was built out of real stone, and he was planning to use real dynamite to blow it all up! He finally gave us the minimum distances where we'd be safe from the explosions, and we also built these moveable metal bunkers to protect the cameras and the operators. When the explosions went off, all of these big stone blocks were flying around, so you couldn't even look through the camera.

Pizzello: Why was the temple

set built with real stone?

Storaro: Dean Tavoularis wanted it to look authentic, of course, but I think it was simply easier to use real materials in that particular location, rather than shipping materials in.

Burum: That temple was well-built, too. When we first attempted those shots, it simply wouldn't go down! Finally, we attached these cables to both heavy-duty tractors and the set, and when the explosion happened we just pulled the temple down.

I'll tell you, when those explosions went off, they were so powerful they would lift you right off the ground. All of the air would be sucked away from you, and then this rush of hot air would come back at you. Joe also warned us, 'Keep under cover, because once the blast goes off, it's gonna be raining snakes.' And it was! [Laughter all around.]

Storaro: In the end, not one person was hurt, which was a real testament to Joe and his crew. They kept everybody informed about what was going to happen every step of the way. All of the camera operators and effects guys were communicating with walkie-talkies, and I can still remember hearing the explosions going off in my ears.

Burum: Vittorio, can you tell us about the lab work and the special processes used on *Apocalypse Now*?

Storaro: Well, I had several problems in that regard. For the first two weeks of shooting, the dailies were being sent to Technicolor Rome, which was just what I wanted. But then Gray Frederickson, the co-producer, said to me, 'We only have one airplane a week that can go to Rome, but we have two or three that can go to Los Angeles, so we're going to have to do the dailies at Technicolor L.A. from now on. Who do you want to deal with there?' Francis was very nervous, because he wanted to see dailies sooner than one week afterwards. But I told Gray,

'Well, tell me who your next cinematographer is going to be, because I'm leaving. How can I have the same collaboration with the people at the lab [in Los Angeles] if I don't know anybody there? They don't know me, and they won't know what to do.' Ernesto Novelli [of Technicolor Rome] had done *The Spider's Stratagem* [1970], *The Conformist* [1971], *Last Tango in Paris* [1973], *1900* [1977] and several other pictures with me, so he knew exactly what kind of look I wanted. Fortunately, after I threatened to leave, they continued to let me send the dailies to Rome.

Also, around that time, Kodak had just introduced its new color negative stock [5247]. I did some tests with the new stock for *1900*, but I didn't really like it. When I did *Scandal* [1976] just before *Apocalypse Now*, Kodak Italy told me, 'You have to use the new stock, because there's none of the old stock left.' I therefore refused to buy the film in Rome, and we called Kodak in Rochester, New York. They had enough of the previous stock for us, so we bought it from them instead for *Scandal*. By the time I was doing *Apocalypse*, there was no way I could use the older stock again, because the [change to the new stock] was almost complete. I wasn't happy with the contrast of the new stock, and when I did some tests in Rome with Ernesto Novelli, we decided to flash the negative of *Apocalypse Now*. After exposing the negative, we would send it to Rome, where they would flash it before developing. Frankly, I don't know how many other producers or directors would have allowed me to do something like that — Francis gave me his complete support.

After I came back from the *Apocalypse* shoot, we did the first timing of the film in Los Angeles with Ernesto Novelli and Larry Rovetti supervising the work. Later, in Rome, I told Ernesto that I was unhappy with the blacks in the film,

because black was one of the most important colors in terms of the visual strategy. Black represented the unconscious, particularly in the sequences where we discover the true meaning of Kurtz; we were trying to show some portions of the truth emerging from the depths of the unconscious. Those scenes were designed to come together like the final pieces of the puzzle we had created, and if the blacks weren't black enough, that aspect of the story would not make as strong an impact visually.

When I told Ernesto I wasn't happy with the blacks, he reminded me of an incident that had occurred several years earlier, during the filming of *1900*. On that picture, we had used an original matrix dye-transfer system, because I wanted to adjust the look to suit the four different time periods in the story. The dye-transfer system was the only way I could accomplish that strategy, and it looked wonderful. At one point, we were shooting in Parma, Italy, and every day we were sending dailies to Ernesto in Rome; occasionally, he would visit me on the set so we could discuss things. One day he came to me with a roll of film, and he said that it had been treated with a new process that he'd invented. I told him I didn't want to see it, though, because I had settled on my approach for *1900* and I felt that this new process would distract me.

Well, later on, when I was having my problems with the blacks on *Apocalypse*, he finally showed me an example of this new process he had developed. He had me look at some images from *Cadavari eccellenti* [1976, a.k.a. *The Context* or *The Illustrious Corpses*], a film directed by Francesco Rosi and shot by Pasqualino De Santis. The movie was a crime thriller that required strong blacks and a very dramatic look, so Rosi and De Santis used Ernesto's new system for all of the dailies; unfortunately, for the usual distribu-

tion reasons, they didn't use the system on the release prints — they only used it for the dailies. It looked great, so I performed some tests during [the postproduction phase of] *Apocalypse Now*, and the dense blacks we got were exactly what I'd had in mind for the scenes with Kurtz. That process, of course, was what came to be known as ENR [in honor of its inventor, whose full name is Ernesto Novelli-Raimond]. While I couldn't apply ENR to the first release prints of *Apocalypse*, I later used the process on *Reds* [1981].

Pizzello: What can you tell us about the current restoration of *Apocalypse Now* for theatrical release?

Storaro: This new version is being supervised by the film's sound editor, Walter Murch, and it will have 55 minutes of footage that was cut from the original picture.

Burum: I'll be glad to see that footage back in the film — especially the key sequence in which the soldiers get off the boat and stumble across a French plantation, where they have dinner with the people who live there. I was so ticked off when that was cut out of the picture, because it really addressed the central philosophical concept that Vittorio mentioned earlier — one culture imposing itself upon another. During the dinner, the French tell the Americans, 'We're not afraid of the Vietcong. These are our people.' A big philosophical discussion ensues, during which the French essentially denounce the Americans as colonialists.

Storaro: I think that scene was cut because of the line in the script that says, 'Never get out of the boat.' When the men do get out of the patrol boat, they run into trouble, and after the scene with the tiger, Francis wanted them to stay on the boat. In my experience, that's still a very good piece of advice! [Hearty laughter around the table.] ■



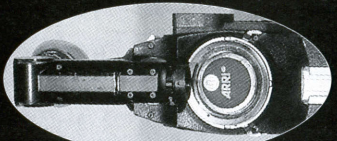
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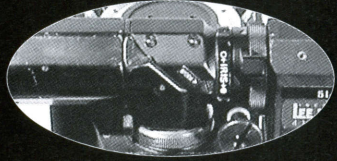
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A Novel Approach to *Dune*

Vittorio Storaro ASC, AIC frames Frank Herbert's classic science-fiction tale in the fledgling 3-perf Univisium format.

by Ray Zone

Unit Photography by Petr Rolick



The production of Frank Herbert's *Dune*, a six-hour miniseries that premiered as a widescreen event in December on the SciFi Channel, marked the realization of a dream for cinematographer Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC, who had long wanted to film Herbert's epic novel. In fact, Storaro was nearly hired in the mid-1970s to shoot a feature-film version that

would have been directed by iconoclastic filmmaker Alejandro Jodorowsky (*El Topo*, *Santa Sangre*). "When I first read *Dune*, it really attracted me because it fit with my philosophy," Storaro recalls. "When I met with the director of the miniseries, John Harrison, we exchanged our passion for the story."

Harrison attests, "I've always seen *Dune* not as science fiction but

as epic adventure, and it operates on a high metaphorical plane for me. Vittorio's work operates on that kind of metaphorical level in terms of color and light, and to me, the marriage of the two is absolutely perfect. The characters in *Dune* are representative of a great many elements in the human condition."

Harrison, who had previously scripted *Tales From the Darkside: The Movie* (1990) and co-scripted *Dinosaur* (2000), adapted Herbert's novel for the small screen. "I basically broke it up in my mind into three separate movies," he says. "The book was originally published as three separate novellas — *Dune*, *Muad' Dib*, and *The Prophet* — so I used that as the paradigm for creating a miniseries. While I created an arc that went from Book One to the end of Book Three, each one had a discrete story to tell — three separate movies unified by one overarching theme."

Herbert's novel presents the adventures of young Paul Atreides (Alec Newman), heir to the noble Duke Leto Atreides (William Hurt) and an ancient prophecy. House Atreides is among several feuding Great Royal Houses that comprise a tenuously balanced trilogy of power, along with an emperor and the Navigators of the Spacing Guild. That balance appears to favor House Atreides when Leto is ordered by Emperor Shaddam IV (Giancarlo Giannini) to oversee the production of Spice, a life-sustaining substance that is the most precious commodity in the universe. It is believed among the houses that he who controls the Spice controls the empire.

When Leto is betrayed by one of his own, a devastating conflict ensues. Paul and his mother, Jessica (Saskia Reeves), a witch with mind-control powers, must escape into the desert. Under his mother's tutelage, Paul hones his own, considerable mystical gifts, begins to see into the future and realizes his far-reaching ability to shape it.

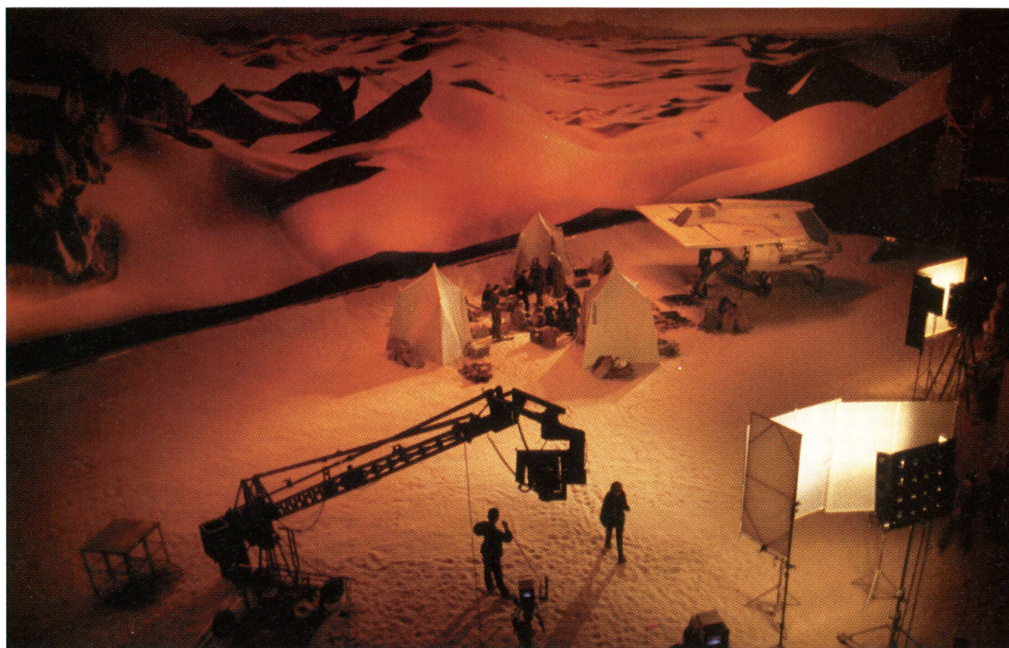
Photos courtesy of USA Networks.

Dune was produced as a feature film in 1984 under the direction of David Lynch, but Storaro says he appreciates the longer form of the current production. "I knew that in making *Dune*, particularly for television, we had a great chance to practice cinema because we had much more time to present the story, [as well as a decent budget]. Usually, the budget for a big TV series is not the same as a big feature film, so you usually have to deal with the [opposite situation]."

When the time came to discuss a format for the project, Storaro had a very specific goal. "Today, every electronic project is transferred to high-definition [HD], and video projects will also be [presented in] the DVD format. You therefore need much higher quality. Very soon, large HDTV sets will be around the world, and the quality of the original project should be high enough to fit the level of a big display. If a video project films just for NTSC [standards], it's a very big mistake," he argues.

Storaro therefore convinced Harrison and producers Richard Rubinstein and Mitchell Galin to film *Dune* in Univisium, a 3-perf format invented and championed by the cinematographer and his son, Fabrizio. "I was thinking about the advantages of a common standard for future television and future cinema," Storaro says. "Widescreen television today [has an aspect ratio] of 1.79:1; French cinema is 1.66:1; American, Italian and European cinema is 1.85:1; 65mm is 2.21:1, and anamorphic is 2.35:1. It's a jungle of numbers, and it's unbelievable that we don't have a uniform standard. When we have to transfer a movie with a pan-and-scan system in order to have a full-screen TV version of the film, it's like cutting a painting to the size of the wall on which it's going to hang.

"I believe that more and more, cinema will be seen in two different

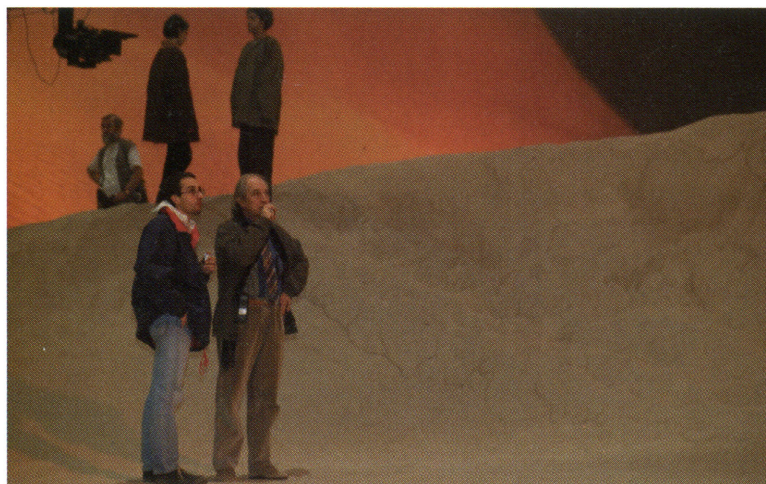


ways: HD and 65mm," he continues. "If this is true, why aren't we thinking today about how to combine those two formats? After it is seen in theaters, a film will be seen with a video projector and on DVD. We need a format that is the same for both situations; 65mm has an aspect ratio of 2.21:1 and HD is 1.79:1, [so I created Univisium] to strike a perfect balance of 2:1."

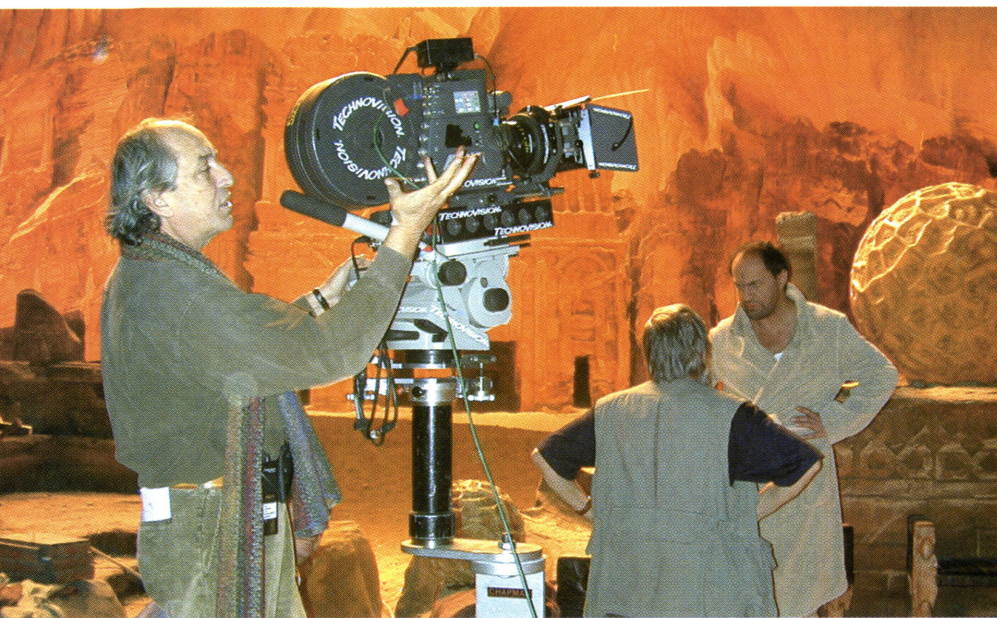
Univisium, which Storaro used for the first time on *Tango* in 1997, is a 3-perf pulldown on film that allows for a wide image suitable for both theatrical projection and home viewing. The image area on

the film negative is 12mm x 24mm, as opposed to 11.35mm x 21mm on panoramic 1.85:1 film. Storaro proposes the use of digital optical sound to preserve this large image area on the negative. "There is a lot of waste in today's film negative," he notes. "We're wasting the sound area [because] we don't use it in the negative. Very soon, there won't even be one in the positive. There is an enormous gap between two frames in 1.85:1. With 2:1, we can use the entire negative for images and can use three perforations instead of four. We can put two frames next to each other with enough space for the splice. The

Opposite page: Stilgar (Uwe Ochsenknecht), a Fremen leader, observes Paul's transformation into Muad'Dib, the long-awaited messiah. This page, above: An overhead view of the set reveals a detailed TransLite of the desert planet, along with several of Vittorio Storaro's multi-fixture Iride lighting units. Left: Storaro confers with his son Fabrizio, who helped create the show's otherworldly TransLites.



A Novel Approach to *Dune*



Above: Storaro gestures from behind his camera, one of the Arri 535Bs that were specially modified by Technovision. The cameras' lens boards were shifted to match the optical center of the film for full-aperture shooting. Below right: The crew shoots through the cockpit window of a spacecraft mounted in a soundstage.

negative is bigger, and because we don't need anamorphic lenses, there is much better image quality with no distortion."

Storaro estimates that by shooting in the Univisium format, the *Dune* production was able to cut costs by 25 percent down the line. "Every camera magazine saves 25 percent more time and film," he says. "That means more creativity for the director and the actors during shooting. At an industrial level, it means 25-percent savings on processing, shipping, and interpositive [expenses]."

Clairmont Camera holds the rights to the system in the United States and Canada, while Italy's Technovision holds the rights elsewhere. Both companies have adapted some Arriflex cameras for Univisium, and Technicolor has licensed the format for processing. "They've made all the changes necessary to print from 3-perf over to 4-perf dailies as needed," Storaro says. In printing from 3-perf to 4-perf from interpositives to internegatives, some anamorphic squeezing of the image is necessary on a Univisium release print to keep the 2:1 ratio."

Dune is the fifth film to be shot in the fledgling format, and the first

to be shot as an original television production. For *Dune*, Technovision modified some Arriflex 535Bs. The camera's lens boards was shifted to match the optical center of the film, just as with Super 35, for full-aperture shooting. The camera's shutter is 180 degrees at its widest opening, and Storaro filmed *Dune* entirely at T4.

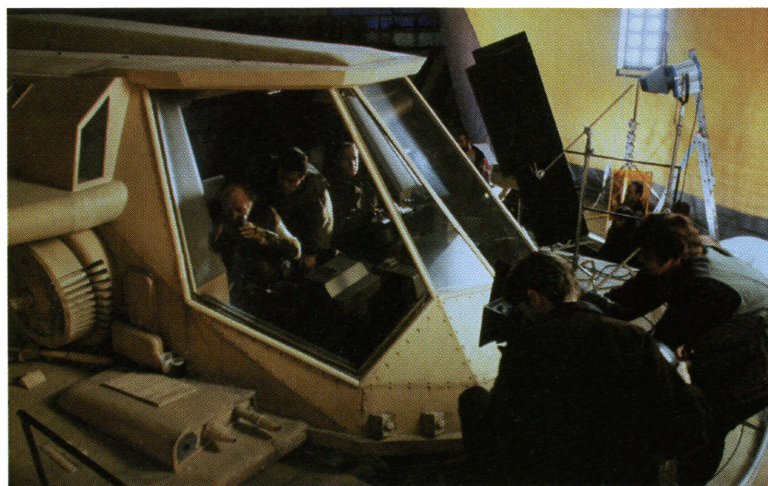
Although he has been "in love" with Cooke Series B lenses for a long time, Storaro chose Series 4 lenses for *Dune*. "They're a little too sharp, but Series 4 is the only Cooke series with a good anti-reflection coating," he notes.

Storaro also proposed to his *Dune* collaborators that he use his

Iride dimmer lightboard in conjunction with TransLite backdrops. "We needed a vision of another planet and the vision of a huge desert," says Storaro. "The filmmakers were originally planning to go to Morocco, Tunisia or Algeria to use real locations. Most of the scenes in *Dune* are at night [and feature] two different moons. Shooting like that can be very expensive.

"Instead, I presented concepts that came from my experience of working with Carlos Saura. On *Flamenco* [1995], we began working with aluminum frames and a special material that was translucent; we mainly worked with light and shadows," he notes. "The second project was *Tango*, on which we used color with screens. On our most recent picture together, *Goya in Bordeaux* [2000], we were able to print images on top of this material.

"I showed the *Dune* producers that we could use this TransLite material [in conjunction] with images that we could create ourselves," Storaro continues. "My son Fabrizio and I made some samples on the computer by mixing together original photographs with transparencies of the desert. We created an entirely new vision, a new world. We could print [images] on this TransLite material and extend them to 300 feet long and 40 feet high. It created a new vision of *Dune*, and it helped the actors



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A Novel Approach to *Dune*

Right: Duke Leto Atrides (William Hurt) escorts Princess Irulan (Julie Cox) during a lavish state dinner staged at the palace on Arrakis. Below: Muad'Dib and Feyd Rautha (Matt Keeslar), nephew and heir to Baron Harkonnen, battle to the death.



because it wasn't just a greenscreen behind them. Every normal shot didn't have to be a special effect, and we didn't need to go out on location."

Storaro notes that the savings created by this approach enabled him to bring his regular crew onto the project, "making the quality level high, but staying within the budget and schedule."

Harrison says he was thrilled by what Storaro was able to accomplish with TransLites. "My fear had been that we would have to make *Dune* with CG images, putting actors in an environment with which they had no connection and asking them to act without any reference," he says. "But when I met with Vittorio and talked about these TransLites, I realized that we could go into a soundstage and create magical environments for the actors, who

would feel as if they were really within them."

Dune was shot at Barrandov Studios in Prague, one of the largest soundstages in Europe. "Leni Riefenstahl made many movies there," says Harrison. "It's huge and well-equipped. The primary benefit of using the soundstage, of course, was to give Vittorio the freedom that we wouldn't have had on location. In searching for ways to create the world of *Dune*, I soon realized we could [either] shoot on location and create a world that was somewhat familiar, using terrain and environments that we all had seen on film, or we could create a very stylized world like nobody had ever seen."

The soundstage at Barrandov Studios features a large overhead grid for lights, but Storaro used it very sparingly. "I don't usually like over-

head lights; light usually doesn't come from overhead in the real world," the cinematographer notes. "I love floor lights or window lights. With the Iride lightboard system, everything was pre-rigged, and I was able to go through lighting changes in a very short time. That was important because we were shooting completely out of continuity."

As with everything Storaro shoots, color was a key element in his strategy for *Dune*. According to Harrison, the first thing the cinematographer did after he was hired was to plot out the spiritual journey of *Dune*'s protagonist, Paul Atrides. "Vittorio wrote a wonderful essay, 'The Journey of Paul Atrides from Birth to Enlightenment,' and it is essentially a journey described in terms of color and lighting. The rest of the characters and locales in *Dune* are also informed by Vittorio's sense of color and light; his cinematography is a really complex form of storytelling on its own, independent of the narrative — you see the odyssey of Paul through Vittorio's work."

Storaro's treatise is what he calls his "ideation," a symbolic map of color and emotion that he develops for every film and uses as a bible for lighting the story. He explains, "For *Dune*, I thought of using the metaphor of becoming mature through four different stages: childhood, youth, adulthood and maturity. So I made the metaphor of the four basic elements: earth, water, fire and air. The harmony between these elements makes the balance of perfect, elemental light. From matter, through these four basic elements, comes energy, and I think this could be a metaphor for what a life is about.

"First, Paul acquires the knowledge of his father, which is symbolized by the element of earth and the color ochre or black. The opposing family, the Harkonnen, are represented by the element of fire and the color red, which signifies



conflict. The people living in the desert country, the Fremen, are represented by the element of water and the color green. The emperor of the entire universe is connected with the element of air, and is therefore seen through the metaphor of the color blue.

"Only at the end, after Paul goes through these four different experiences, these four different colors, does he become the ruler of the planet. At that point he becomes a symbol of energy, which is the unity of the four basic elements, symbolized by the color white."

To achieve his color scheme, Storaro relied on color gels that bear his own name: Rosco's Vittorio Storaro (VS) Collection. The development of the collection can be traced to the early 1980s, when Storaro was shooting *One From the Heart* for Francis Coppola. The cinematographer recalls that Rosco



A Technovision camera is dollied through the palace set during the elaborate dinner sequence.

Cinegels were unnecessarily complicated to use at that time. "It was almost impossible to use just one normal gelatin to achieve one specific color," he remembers. "With yellow, for example, I had to use three layers; for indigo, I was mixing magenta with blue."

Storaro began collaborating

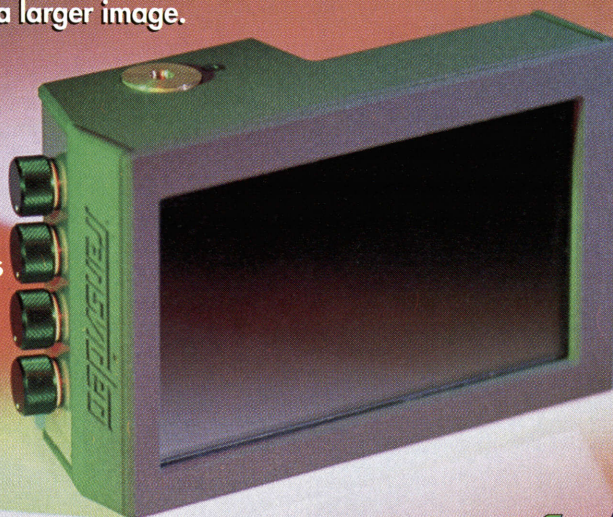
with Rosco on the creation of a collection that would feature a single gel for a single color; the result was a new collection that encompasses the seven colors that prismatically break out of white light: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. Storaro suggested that the collection be named after Sir Isaac Newton,

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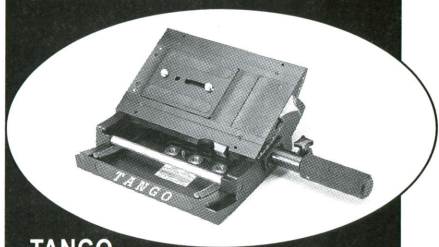
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A Novel Approach to Dune

who is credited with discovering the array of colors, but Rosco elected to name it after Storaro instead.

The use of VS gels on *Dune* was another cost-effective measure. "When you use more than one layer of gels, the heat from the light destroys them, and it becomes twice as expensive to use them," Storaro points out. "In addition to using single gels, we kept the lights from the dimmer board down until we rolled camera, so I was saving money on both the lights and the gels — it takes time to change both."

Storaro selected Kodak Vision 200T (5274) stock for the production, noting that the emulsion "has enough sensitivity to make my work on a soundstage very comfortable. It [cuts well with] any other high-speed film, and the color and contrast will hold up." He adds that Kodak stocks have noticeably improved since he shot *Dick Tracy* in 1990. "At that time, the film was not able to reproduce specific tonalities such as indigo and violet, and I met with Kodak representatives to discuss that," he recalls. "The new negatives and positives are more selective in reading different wavelengths — you can tell the difference between blue, indigo and violet."

Harrison notes that although *Dune* is set in the future, "it's almost retro, more like Shakespeare than Heinlein or Asimov. The story is very classical — a young prince is taken from his home by his father, who is loyal to the emperor, to a world where he has no desire to go. Conspiracy is everywhere. There is fighting over the wealth of the empire, and the boy is left to die in the desert. He's adopted by the indigenous desert people, who are seeking a messiah; he plays into their myths, becomes their hero and leads them in a successful rebellion against the empire."

"Early on, I told Vittorio I wanted to shoot *Dune* in a traditional, classical style," Harrison

continues. "I did not want to create a fast editing pace, and I did not want to use handheld cameras. I wanted to dispense with most of the contemporary cinema vocabulary. I wanted to go back to the classic style, which Vittorio was very happy to do."

"This meant that the lenses we wound up using were generally in the 25mm range. Rarely did we go above the 75mm focal length. There were a few instances where, for an emotional moment, we went to 200mm or 300mm, but we mainly used wider lenses."

"I wanted the camerawork to be a function of telling the story," says Harrison. "One day, when I was worried about how we were staging a particular scene, Vittorio told me a wonderful thing. He said, 'John, you have to pick the spot where you want the camera to be at the key moment, and back up from there. That way, the camera will be at the perfect place for the scene [when you reach] that moment.' The camera moves in *Dune* were all designed to get to that moment."

One of the unusual visual touches in *Dune* is the use of ultraviolet contact lenses and black light to convey the deep-blue eyes of the Fremen. UV "spill" in some of the shots had to be cleaned up in post-production, and Lou Levinson, a colorist at PostLogic who has worked with Storaro for a dozen years, handled the chores with Storaro sitting alongside. The final 3-perf film was recorded to high-definition 24p at 1080. A 1080i color-corrected master was made and used to create masters on Digibeta, D2 and D3 at both standard definition and HD digital-component formats. The color-corrected 1080i can be taken over to PAL, NTSC or another HD-cam tape.

"Vittorio is used to pushing the boundaries of what film can do," says Levinson. "I'm grateful I've had a chance to work with him for 12 years — he keeps me on my toes." ■

Short Takes

Experimental Kafka and a Train to the Future

Torture Chamber

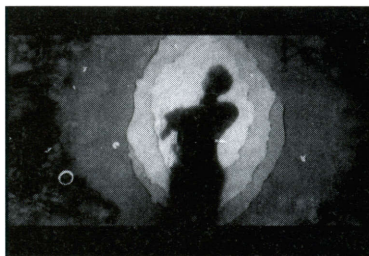
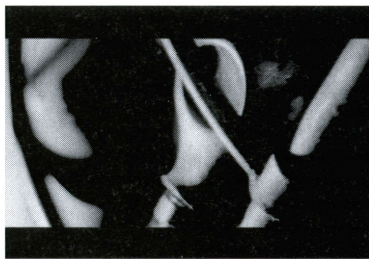
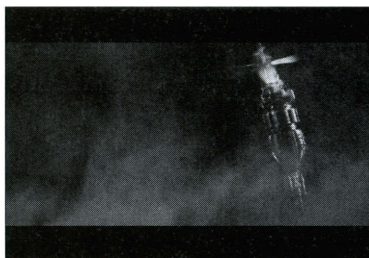
by Stephanie Argy

Cinematographer James Hawkinson had long been interested in making a film out of Franz Kafka's short story "In the Penal Colony." So when his agent faxed him the script for the short film *Zoetrope*, he immediately recognized that the movie was based on that story — and that it was hardly a literal adaptation. "I could see that [the screenplay] was very stream-of-consciousness," says Hawkinson.

In Kafka's story, an explorer visits a penal colony, where he is horrified by an officer who operates a vicious device that tortures prisoners to death. *Zoetrope*, written and directed by Charlie Deaux, transforms that idea into a visceral experience, attempting to put the viewer into the mind of a man imprisoned and slowly driven to suicide by his own feelings of guilt. "The idea was to turn the perspective on the audience, so they would have more of an experience than just being entertained," says Deaux. "Obviously, we've taken a lot of creative license with the short story."

Zoetrope is set in a retro-futuristic world that Deaux envisioned as Jules Verne filtered through Philip Stark, Frank Gehry and other contemporary industrial designers. "I wanted it to have a hand-made quality," says Deaux. "That's one reason we decided to shoot in black-and-white." Another reason was that black-and-white — in this case, Kodak 5222 35mm stock — enhanced the surrealism of the setting. "Black-and-white immediately takes you out of reality," Hawkinson maintains.

Deaux began making the film in



Florida, where he spent three days shooting in a turn-of-the-century power plant that was being torn down. Production moved to Los Angeles for "the meat of the piece," he says, and that is where he met with Hawkinson to discuss the project. Deaux explained the aesthetic he had in mind, which highlighted gears, machines and textual elements that harked back to the Industrial Age of the late 1800s.

This aesthetic even influenced the filmmakers' approach to visual effects. Although *Zoetrope* includes some very modern techniques, including Inferno work done at Asylum Visual Effects in Santa Monica, it also uses some old-fashioned, in-camera effects such as rear projection. "Working in black-and-white made compositing a huge question mark," says Hawkinson. At one point, he remembers, he and Deaux toyed with the idea of shooting in color, pulling mattes and compositing, and then converting the images to black-and-white. Ultimately, though, they decided that a blend of very old and new effects techniques was more appropriate to the production and its world of stylized devices.

The machines and models in the movie, including the torture apparatus and the interiors and exteriors of a very stylized spaceship, were built by machinist Tim Zegenbein. "He was a young guy who had a little shop," says Deaux. "I told him, 'Our deadline is when you get it done and it looks right.'"

Throughout production, Hawkinson was impressed by Deaux's patience. "Charlie is certainly a perfectionist," he says. The director even

Images from the short film *Zoetrope*, which is based on Franz Kafka's story "In the Penal Colony."

The black-and-white *Zoetrope* employs in-camera effects such as rear projection, in addition to modern visual-effects techniques. "I wanted it to have a handmade quality," says director Charlie Deaux.

agreed to break production down into several different shoots, each one focusing on a section of the movie.

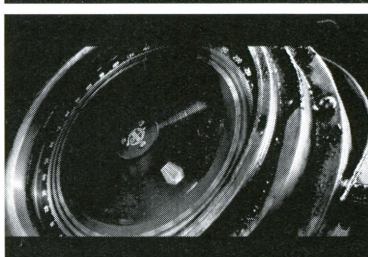
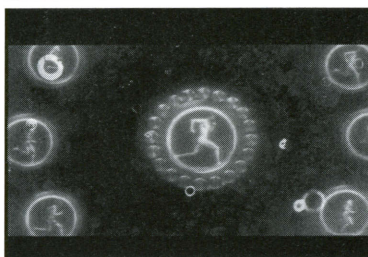
The first shoot in Los Angeles took place over two days at a power plant, where the company filmed the officer and his torture device. In the background were scores of huge machines, which Hawkinson backlit to increase the sense of depth. In the foreground, actors performed on a grating, with sparks and steam shooting up from below (courtesy of Zegenbein). For this part of the production, Hawkinson used a Panavision G2 as his sound camera, but he also used a PanArri 435 because of its ability to change frame rates on the fly. "I was doing a lot of in-camera ramps," he explains.

When production resumed for the second L.A. shoot, it was for motion-control work at the Chandler Group. Hawkinson had worked at the now-defunct visual-effects company Boss Films for a few years, and although he had never programmed motion-control rigs, he knew what they could do. In particular, he felt that the technology could be used for much more artistic and elaborate shots than are usually attempted with it, and he wanted to try such a shot for *Zoetrope*.

"We had about 60 feet of track on a diagonal on the stage," says Hawkinson. A stylized spaceship was mounted on a boom at the end of the track, and Hawkinson asked the motion-control technicians to make the camera crane up and do two complete revolutions as it traveled toward the ship. He admits that he pushed the technicians hard; programming alone took nearly two days.

Meanwhile, second-unit cinematographer Alex Buono used a Frazier lens to shoot a series of inserts of old typewriters and other objects that conveyed the antiquated feel Deaux wanted for the movie. Buono also shot backlit sprays of water particles at 40 fps so they could later be composited with the motion-control shots of the ship.

In the final shoot, Hawkinson used a Kenworthy snorkel lens to shoot the interiors of miniatures built by



Zegenbein. "Tim designed the sets to accommodate the physicality of the Kenworthy," says Hawkinson. "I think he built eight miniatures, [and] they were pretty much made from the stuff you find at junkyards and Home Depot."

That same weekend, Hawkinson and Deaux also did their rear-projection work. During their first L.A. shoot (at the power plant), they had photographed some fast pans across the background, and they used those as rear-projection elements. For some sequences, they also

projected animations by filmmaker Robert Beebe. Hawkinson says he was surprised by how much space it took to shoot rear projection. To create a spread of 12' x 12', he recalls, the projector had to be about 50 feet behind the screen. "It's a little tricky exposure-wise," he adds. "The screen is always a stop or two brighter than you think."

Throughout the shoot, Hawkinson notes, he lit a bit differently for black-and-white than he would have for color, mainly to get enough separation between foregrounds and backgrounds. "With color, you get the separation just from the chroma; with black-and-white, I like to do it a bit more theatrically, a bit more backlit."

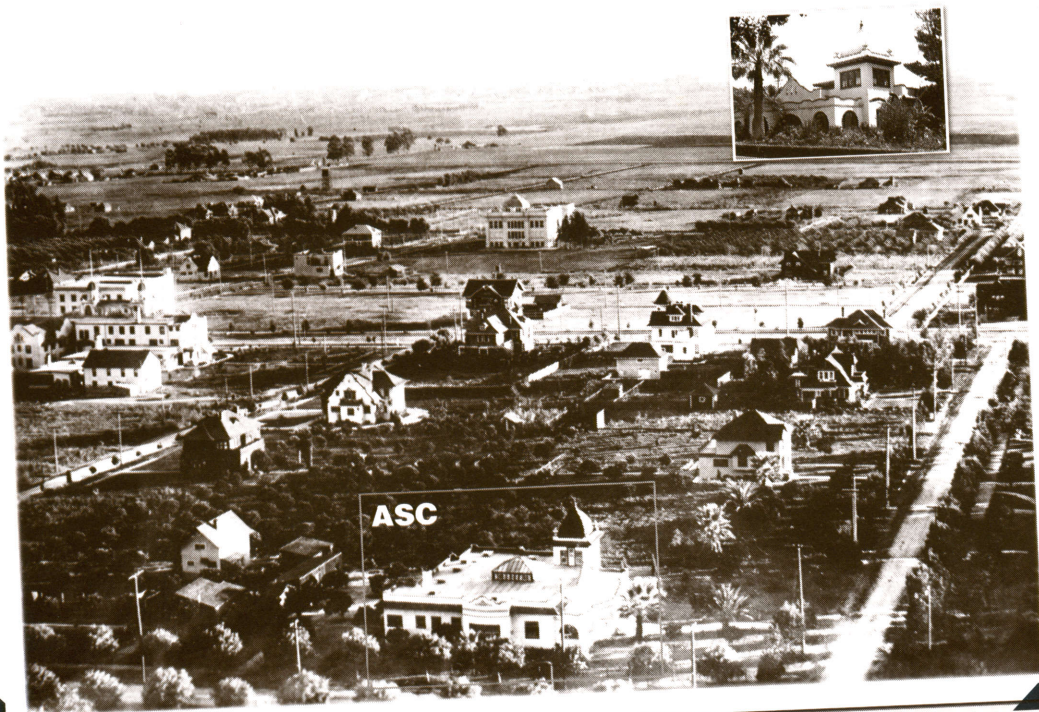
Hawkinson used Panavision Mark II lenses on the production. To increase tension during the power-plant torture sequence, he used longer and longer focal lengths as the scene progressed. "It gets tighter and tighter," he notes. He also had to go with relatively long lenses during the rear-projection shoot, because anything wider than about 35mm would see beyond the edges of the screen.

For film processing, Hawkinson turned to Cheshire System in Burbank, which he praises as "a great black-and-white lab."

Because *Zoetrope* is so impressionistic and highly composed, it required a long time in postproduction. Inferno artist Andy Davis of Asylum and editor Lee Cowan of Terminal worked on the film whenever they could, squeezing it in between other projects. "I did it on nights and weekends," Cowan says. "It took me months and months! There were many incarnations, because the film was completely discovered as we edited it."

Cowan notes that with experimental material such as *Zoetrope*, it's best to try out many different approaches, because the right one will reveal itself eventually. In this case, the right approach turned out to be very complex, with backwards footage, still frames, speed ramps and layer upon layer of superimpositions. "It was the most difficult thing I've ever edited," says Cowan. "When I was finished, it was about 10 video layers high. I believe

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Davis enhanced the final images even more, adding distortion, glow and more subtle details, including additional layers that are hardly visible onscreen. "We were trying to lend an organic feel to what was going on," says Davis.

Ultimately, Cowan says that while working on *Zoetrope*, he felt that he was writing a new visual language, explaining the language to the audience, and then telling them a story in that language. "I think people tend to get into the formulaic — they have a model, and they follow it," he says. "True experimental filmmaking takes place outside those parameters."

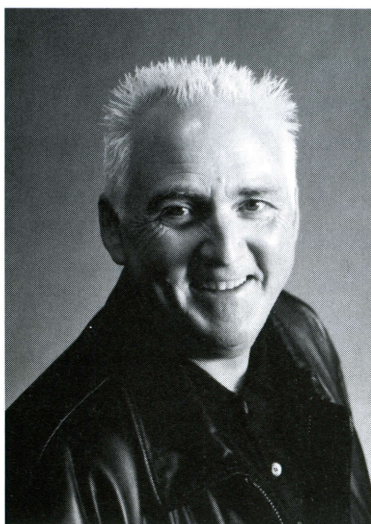
Dream-World Express by Stephanie Argy

The "Chasm" spot for the Norfolk Southern train company is set in two different worlds — an idealized downtown of skyscrapers and parks, and a pulsating, glowing, digital wonderland — that are linked by a Norfolk Southern train. "[The company] wanted to show that they had a foot in each world," says David Dryer, director of the spot.

Neither of the worlds actually existed, however; both were created as 3-D computer-graphic models by the Black Box division of Rhythm & Hues. The only real elements are the people who populate the brick-and-mortar city, who were photographed over two days against bluescreen.

"It was kind of an amazing production," says cinematographer Bruce Logan. "We were basically following an animatic." As a result, Logan and Dryer needed to recreate camera moves that been mapped out in a computer, which was "harder than creating something from scratch in live action," according to Logan.

Dryer created the previsualization animatic, which featured shapes but no detail, with Black Box artists. The artists are well-versed in many different techniques so that each can do a variety of work, rather than focus on one specialty. They also participate actively in the design and conceptualization process.



Cinematographer Bruce Logan, a visual-effects specialist who photographed the Norfolk Southern spot.

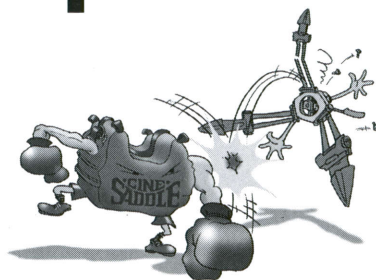
"Our artists are involved pretty much every step of the way," says Jon-Mark Austin, the division's CG supervisor. "[That way,] we can turn projects around much faster, and hand-offs between artists are much easier."

Austin says "Chasm" was basically assembled before it was shot. "We really hammered on the pre-viz animatic," he recalls. "When we got to the set, we were able to match our live-action moves with the CG moves we'd already done. We knew exactly what to expect; surprises on a job like this can be deadly."

But certain moves — such as very fast zooms and tracking shots — are much simpler in the digital world. "It's a lot easier for a computer to suddenly plunge 15 stories in two seconds than it is for the camera," says Logan. Dryer, who supervised special photographic effects for *Blade Runner*, knew Logan could help him find ways to recreate the necessary moves and zooms. "Bruce is one of the cinematographers who knows as much and maybe more than I do about what you can do with the camera," he enthuses.

Logan, who is also a visual-effects specialist and director in his own right, has worked on some of the most iconic shots in all of film, including the explosion of the Death Star in *Star Wars* and the bone-to-spaceship graphic match in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. For

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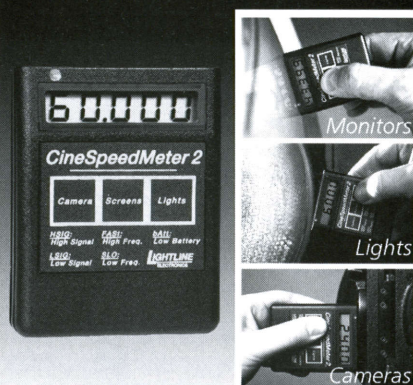
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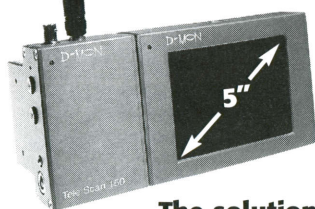
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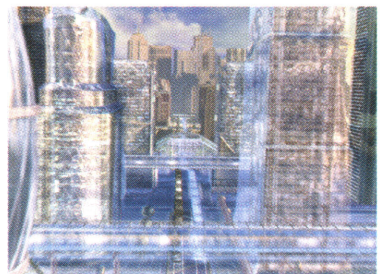
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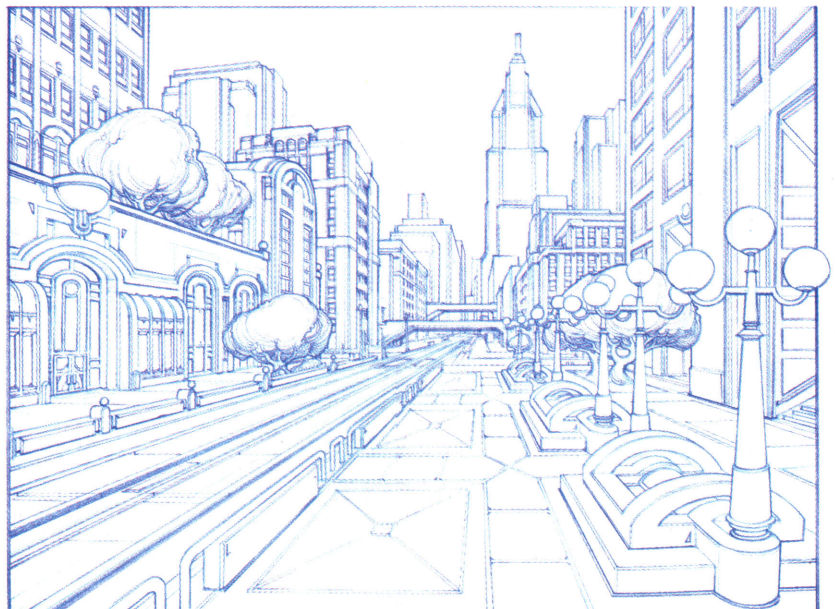
In the spot "Chasm," a Norfolk Southern train links an idealized downtown with a futuristic wonderland. Both worlds were created as 3-D CG models.

"Chasm," he needed to shoot a variety of city dwellers from many different angles so that they could be composited into the 3-D animated city.

The live-action shoot was organized mainly around the placement of the enormous bluescreens, one 40' x 60' and the other 60' x 60', which had to be rearranged along the walls and floor depending on the perspective of each shot. "In some cases, we were looking down on people from 150 feet above them," says Logan. "At other times, we had to look up at someone on a beam."



Photos courtesy of Envision



Although it might be difficult to see them all onscreen, the spot features more than 100 live figures, who were played by about 16 extras and four principal actors. "We kept recycling and re-photographing the extras," Dryer notes.

"The other interesting part of the project was doing lighting that had to match the computer environment," says Logan. "David had a very clear idea about how he wanted the light to be in the city — late afternoon, very warm. The computer city had its own inner glow, but the ambient light in the world was the same."

To get the warm light Dryer wanted, Logan used double 85 gels on incandescent 20Ks. He employed incandescent lights because he had to use different frame rates to capture the speed of movements in the animatic. "I'm not a great believer in shooting high speed with HMLs," he says. "They're supposed to be flicker-free, but I've gotten burned a few times."

Understanding the quality of light is another important factor in making an effects spot look realistic, he says. "You have to be able to give it that natural look, even though you're piling on the footcandles. If you're doing a day exterior, you have a key light, usually a warm light that has the quality of the sun, then the canopy of the sky like a huge, soft light. As soon as you start to fill things with hard lights, it loses that soft quality. You have to mimic what nature does, but at a much higher intensity level."

Logan notes that Dryer is one of the few people who prefer bluescreen to the greenscreen that's becoming the industry standard. "He feels that the spill light that comes off the blue is a lower value than that which comes off the green, and he also feels that the matting of very fine elements, like hair, is better with the blue."

Bluescreens are less forgiving than greenscreens, however, and they require more work. "The beauty about digital green is that you bring a green in and it works with the ambient light on the set — it pretty much takes care of itself," says Logan. But bluescreens have to be carefully lit. "I usually like to expose

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a bluescreen about a stop under the ambient gray exposure. As soon as you overexpose the blue, its very fine matting properties go away."

Knowing it was critical for the mattes to pull cleanly on "Chasm," Logan chose his stock carefully. "We all like to shoot with fast stocks, but [for this shoot] it had to be used as a matting stock." He ultimately selected Kodak Vision 200T (5274). "I'd have used the 500 if it were stable enough, but I don't [think it is]. It takes longer to pull a matte."

Because the work was destined for compositing, Logan put no filtration on the PanArri 435 he used for the shoot. The main lenses were a 4:1 Primo zoom (17.5mm-75mm) and an 11:1 Primo zoom (24mm-275mm).

According to Austin, Dryer had specific ideas about how the two worlds would differ. Dryer told the artists he wanted rectilinear shapes for the realistic downtown. "In the brick-and-mortar world, the goal was very much to create a realistic city, but the kind of place where you really would want to live and explore," Austin says. "We deliberately chose not to do traffic; the only mode of transportation was the Norfolk Southern train." On the digital side, Dryer wanted more flowing, curvaceous lines, reminiscent of Frank Gehry's design for the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain. The digital side is also laced with mathematical symbols that float across the structures.

Black Box artists built the two cities in NewTek LightWave. "LightWave has a lot of pros and cons," says Austin. "It's easier to get a photorealistic result, but the system lacks many animation tools and controls." LightWave is a polygonal renderer, meaning that it builds its 3-D images out of many tiny, multi-sided figures. According to Austin, some scenes in "Chasm" required close to 2.5 million polygons. "It was easily the most modeling I've ever done on a project," he notes. The shots feature an enormous amount of detail — in a diner, for example, condiments are visible on the shelves. "Every shot is very dense, and the spot lends itself to multiple viewings," Austin concludes. ■

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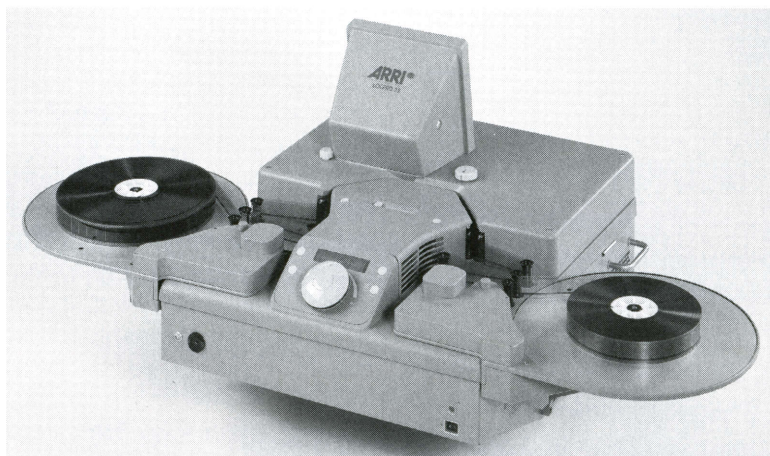
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The Arriflex LocPro 35
by Richard Crudo, ASC

With all of the dubious claims being made about new imaging technologies, it's nice to know the folks at Arriflex still believe in doing things the right way. Their wonderful product, the Arri LocPro 35, is a portable 35mm projector designed to screen printed dailies at any time and in a minimum of space, virtually anywhere in the world. Given that optimal 35mm projection remains the standard before which all pretending forms of image display must concede, the LocPro 35's performance

approaches the best of what is seen at the laboratory, and it offers a great advantage to feature cinematographers, directors and editors in making accurate judgments of their work. In an industry in which change is often embraced purely for its own sake, this device is a refreshingly intelligent development, one that will be useful for many years to come.

Last November, I brought along the LocPro 35 as part of a location shoot in Nelson, British Columbia, for the Disney/Spyglass feature *Out Cold*. Even though I was 300 miles from the nearest screening room, I was determined not to miss out on viewing every frame of dailies

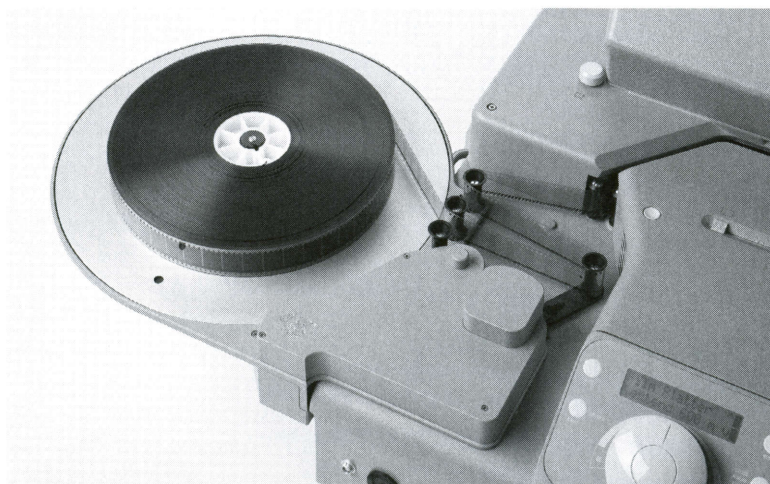
for the two weeks we were scheduled to spend there. During that time, the production really put the LocPro 35 through its paces. It was set up, broken down, packed, moved, unpacked and remounted on several occasions, and it performed beautifully through screenings that ran close to two hours each evening. In almost every way, the LocPro 35 met my demands for consistency. It also exceeded the high hopes I had for its ease of use. An added bonus was the producer-friendly rental cost, which nonetheless pales in comparison to the knowledge and peace of mind this machine can provide the working cinematographer.

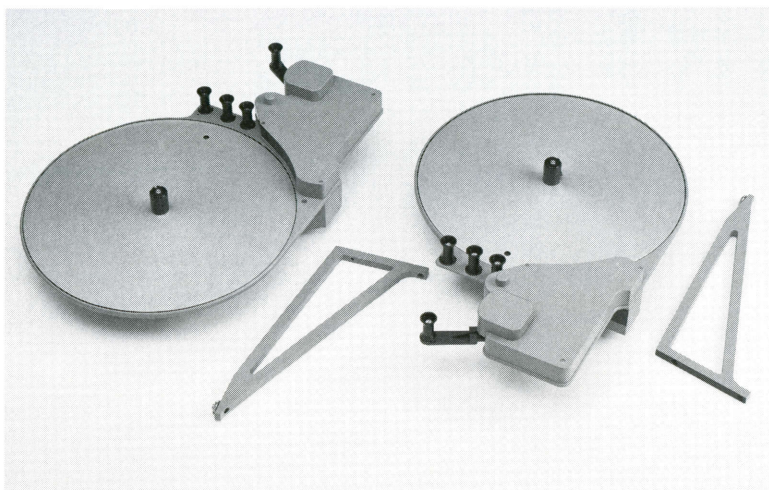
Weighing in at just over 100 pounds and measuring a compact 29" x 28" x 20", the LocPro 35 fits handily on a decent-size tabletop, thus supplying any company with the opportunity to turn such spaces as motel rooms or production offices into better-than-serviceable screening environments.

Powered by standard house current, it can be set up in minutes, and anyone can become an expert on its operation in a short amount of time. Prints are easily loaded into an open-channel system similar to that of flatbed editing tables. Once film is in place, loops are formed automatically, and the film is moved by a directly driven, double-sided sprocket wheel. This patented intermittent film drive is accurate to less than 0.01 seconds at any projection speed, up to the LocPro 35's maximum rate of 60 frames per second. In addition, a computer controller guarantees constant film tension and safe movement of both feed and take-up sides.

A manual-focusing f2.5 50mm lens projects the film image onto a pair of angled mirrors, which then direct the picture to the screen without any distortion. An auto stop feature prevents accidental roll-outs by suspending operation

The Arriflex LocPro 35 is a portable 35mm projector designed to screen printed dailies in a minimum of space. It is powered by standard house current and can be set up in minutes.





six feet before the end of the reel. A high-speed shuttle capability allows for fast winding — forward or reverse — at up to 200 fps.

Synchronized sound is achieved through the integrated use of a separate audio unit, such as the Magnasync. To work with a DAT player, an LTC (time code) output is available.

An easy-to-follow instruction manual and trouble-shooting menu are shipped with the device, but servicing is limited to trained personnel.

An interesting sidelight is the LocPro 35's optional, built-in video camera. This camera can be hooked up to a monitor, video recorder or video printer in order to provide instant video dailies lifted directly from the printed footage. Because video dailies are virtually irrelevant to the feature cinematographer, he can take solace from the fact that this aftermarket transfer can be electronically masked to coincide with whatever format might be in use.

I've seen the results of this procedure on VHS, and though the masking is indeed precise, the visual quality is about what you would expect in a transfer from a print source: somewhat murky and ill-defined. At an NTSC 2:1 interlaced standard of 768 x 494 pixels (with an image resolution of 470 lines), this should be no surprise, but it is hardly a strike against the LocPro 35. The timeliness and convenience of simultaneous tape dailies are welcomed by many producers. Furthermore, the original intent of the machine makes any complaint about transfer quality irrelevant.

The most important news is that the projected image delivered by the LocPro 35 was nothing short of superlative. In every instance, the picture was steady, sharp, flicker-free and absolutely on par with the best of what is seen in more traditional facilities. At a distance of 15' from the screen, the LocPro 35's 400-watt HTI (5400 degrees Kelvin) light source delivered a clear, bright, 8'-wide image in 1.85 format, evenly illuminated from corner to corner at an optimum 15 footlamberts. In addition, once the focus was set, it stayed put. There was never any drifting in and out, nor was there any



breathing in the gate. Contrast and color fidelity were exactly what they were supposed to be: excellent. Scenes of extreme highs and lows that were shot under the harshest lighting conditions in sunny, snowy mountains held their values perfectly. At the opposite end of the exposure curve, dark, low-key interiors and night exteriors maintained their richness without flaring the highlights or shadows in any way. In many aspects, the overall quality of the image exceeded that to which I had become accustomed while screening for several weeks at the lab in Vancouver.

The LocPro 35 is also surprisingly quiet. We took no heroic measures to sequester the unit — it merely sat on a table at the back of a small room and proved to be no distraction at all. This, too, is a great improvement on all of the inferior, double-system location projectors I've used in the past, some of which sounded like freight trains!

I do have several minor complaints about the LocPro 35, but these are certain to be corrected shortly. First, as confirmed by my own framing leader, the projector's 1.85 masking was slightly off, showing somewhat more headroom and left side of the frame than was actually photographed. A true inching knob that would allow for fine adjustments should be a standard provision, rather than the imprecise default method currently allowed. Easily removable mattes in 1.85, 2.40 and 1.33 would be a good idea, too. Additionally, the lock-up of the film gate housing can be a bit temperamental from time to time. If the projectionist makes a mistake while re-seating it, an error code appears in the LCD window and the machine must be rebooted, and this process took close to an hour one evening. The LocPro also lost sync with the audio unit on occasion, but this was most likely a cabling or signal problem, both of which are easily addressed.

For the feature cinematographer — indeed, for anyone who truly cares about the quality of the pictures they create — the importance of seeing print dailies on a timely basis cannot be denied or overstated. While the commu-



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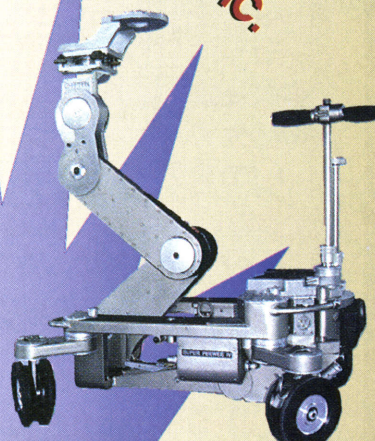
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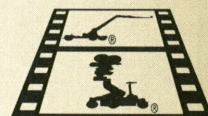
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nity of cinematographers encourage and welcome change — the word “progress” is part of the ASC logo — those who are so eager to pronounce photochemical technology dead in the water need to stop and think for a moment. Replacing a proven standard with one that at this time is in many ways inferior is no way to meet the future — it is a giant step backward. And if simplicity of design and consistency of performance still have any meaning in this industry, the LocPro 35 has a lot to show us all.

For more information, contact your nearest Arriflex subsidiary or agency, or visit www.arri.com.

Digital Community

Flixer, an Internet-enabled entertainment studio, offers digital moviemakers worldwide the creative tools and community and the platform to be seen and produced. Created for professional and amateur moviemakers, Flixer encourages members to collaborate with a creative community of peers and share their work with movie fans and industry decision-makers. The combination of Flixer.com, a platform where moviemakers can express their interests, promote their skills and showcase their projects, and Flixer Studios, a traditional offline production and distribution business, will give filmmakers access to creative and financial resources that will help get their movies made.

The Flixer.com community is a place to discover a brilliant cast or crew and get the help or feedback needed. Online personal production offices that house forums for commentary on in-the-works projects allow individuals to display their work and invite other members to comment or observe the evolution of projects. The production offices provide an exchange of valuable feedback and insight between members.

Once a production office is up and running, Flixer Studios lends a hand in bringing a member's creation to the public. Any member can pitch both feature-length or short digital movies to the Flixer community and ultimately Flixer Studios to be considered for a potential

production deal. Ongoing challenges and moviemaking contests allow movie fans to vote on their favorite projects, which Flixer Studios might award prizes to or greenlight for production.

“All movies, especially indie projects, rely heavily on their ability to build word-of-mouth buzz — a process that usually begins after a movie has been released,” says Robert Lazarus, co-founder and CEO of Flixer. “Through our unique platform, Flixer will naturally generate built-in awareness for its projects, even before they are made.”

Flixer Studios productions will also have its own production bungalows featuring behind-the-scenes looks at the films and communication tools that allow members to interact openly with the set. This interactive platform, which creates built-in audiences for movies while they are in production, will also be available to non-Flixer productions.

For more information, visit the Flixer Web site at www.flixer.com.

Cyber Reels

ReelsOnDemand.com, The Demo Reel Showcase, co-founded by cinematographer Doug Shannon and Iron Street Labs, has launched its Web site showcasing the work of film and television industry professionals. Producers can log on to ReelsOnDemand.com and view high-quality video demo reels and portfolios of top directors, cinematographers, production designers, editors, costume designers, stylists, agents, reps and others. The site uses Apple's QuickTime 4 to provide the highest quality video available on the Web today.

ReelsOnDemand.com streamlines the process of editing, copying and distributing demo reels, saving time and money for both artists and producers. Artists can fulfill reel requests immediately by directing people to the Web site, and can also profit from wider exposure. Reels posted on ReelsOnDemand.com are interactive and easily updateable.

For more information about ReelsOnDemand.com, contact Doug Shannon toll-free at 1-866-66-REELS, e-mail: dshannon@ReelsOnDemand.com or visit www.reelsondemand.com.

Kick-Starting Shanghai's Visual Effects

KickStart Productions, an animation and visual-effects production company, has been launched in Hollywood. Concurrently, the new company has formed a major production alliance with Shanghai Digital Studio, the new digital division of the long-established Shanghai Film Studios in Shanghai, China.

KickStart Productions will utilize Shanghai Digital Studio's 75 animation workstations and U.S.-trained animators to create high-quality 3-D animation at significantly lower costs for U.S.- and Europe-based television, film, home entertainment and multimedia productions.

Jason Netter, formerly of Netter Digital, heads KickStart Productions as its president and founder. “KickStart Productions offers the most efficient and cost-effective means by which to design, create and produce computer generated imagery for children's television programming and other projects anywhere in the world,” he says. “We can marry Hollywood-based client supervision and CGI production experience with state-of-the-art digital facilities in China, so producers can literally have the best of both worlds.”

As required by each production, KickStart will handle pre-production and front-end modeling, as well as supervise the CGI work produced in China. KickStart Productions' U.S. facility will focus on visual effects for TV, film, home entertainment and multimedia projects.

Additionally, KickStart Productions and Shanghai Digital Studio are planning to become original content producers, and also have the capacity to become financial co-production partners on original TV series and projects based anywhere in the world.

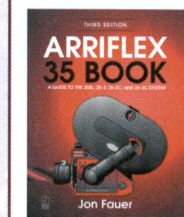
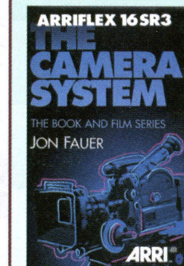
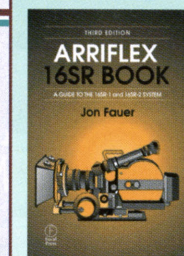
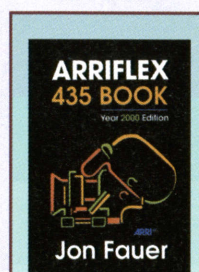
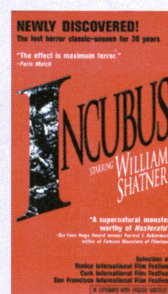
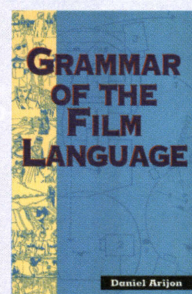
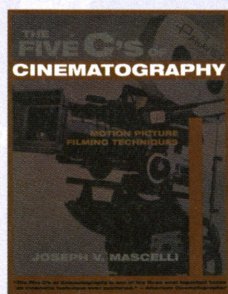
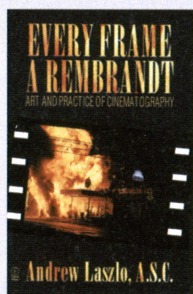
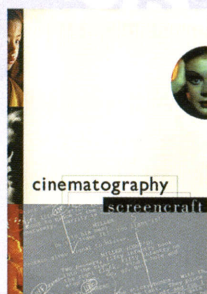
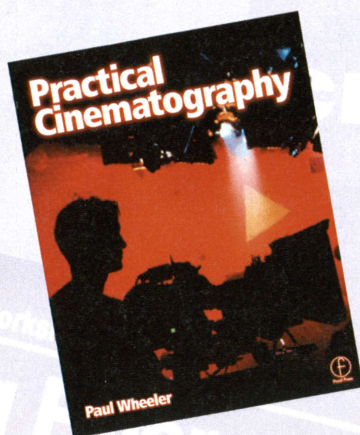
The animators working at the Shanghai Digital Studio will utilize state-of-the-art digital equipment. Netter and Larry Stanton, technical consultant to KickStart Productions, have worked with Shanghai Film Studios president Zhu Yongde to establish and launch the company's digital division. The Shanghai Digital Studio also features a full produc-

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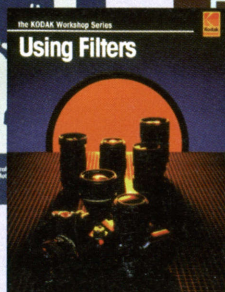
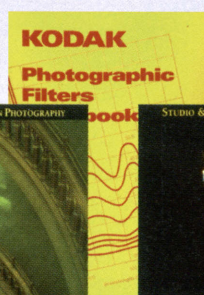
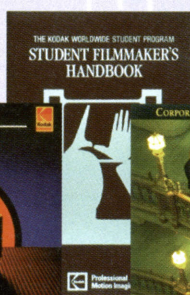
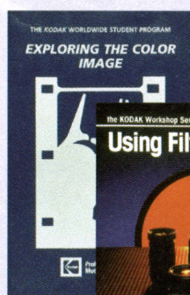


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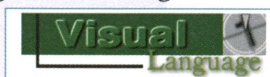


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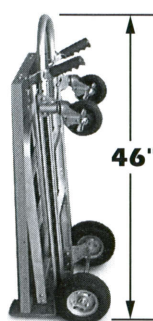
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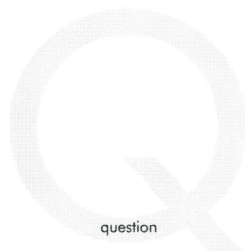
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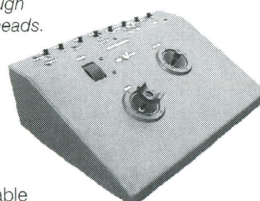
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Points East

Pollock Explores an Artist's Inner Torment

by Eric Rudolph

According to the absorbing new biopic *Pollock*, the short life of art legend Jackson Pollock was a near-constant maelstrom of emotion. Produced and directed by Ed Harris, who also plays the title role, the film paints a searing portrait of the man who turned the art world upside-down in the late 1940s with his then-startling drip paintings. A habitual abuser of alcohol, the artist tormented not only himself, but also his family and friends.

Despite Pollock's volatile nature, Harris and cinematographer Lisa Rinzler employed a classic visual style for the film, which they shot in New York City and on Long Island. "He was a combustible, turbulent, energetic man," Rinzler says of the painter, who died in a drunk-driving accident in 1956. "He was a very internal person who always seemed ready to explode. We could have used a frenetic visual style, but we instead opted for the counterpoint of a precise and somewhat classical look, which we hoped would build dramatic tension." Thus, while Rinzler's camera is frequently in motion, the movement is often inconspicuous. "Pollock employed a two-step, dance-like movement when he painted, so it seemed natural to move the camera for those scenes," she explains.

However, the filmmakers occasionally freed up the camera to convey the artist's creative energy. During one key sequence in which Pollock discovers his breakthrough drip-painting technique, the camera finally breaks loose in an exhilarating, 360-degree Steadicam move around the ecstatic artist.

During preproduction, Harris and Rinzler spent a great deal of time



Painter Jackson Pollock (Ed Harris) begins to perfect the drip technique that will make him famous.

discussing their visual strategy. "Ed Harris and I considered several styles, including an experimental look. We screened various films shot in that type of style, most notably *Thirty-Two Short Films About Glenn Gould*," Rinzler details. "[That film's approach to biographical material] was a real reference point for us at one end of the spectrum. But the more classical visual approach we ultimately chose simply meshed better with Ed's style of acting and directing."

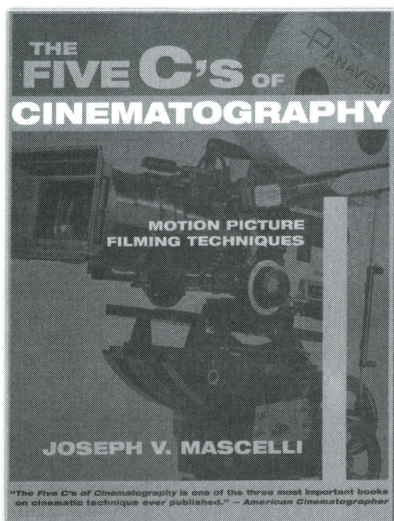
In hewing to this more restrained approach, Rinzler kept her interior-lighting schemes simple but dramatic, mainly employing large, individual tungsten sources (up to 20K in power) placed outside the windows of the sets, with minimal fill provided by bounce cards. For summer scenes, the lights were fitted with Chimera diffusers; for winter scenes, they were bounced off silver-lamé boards to create a softer illumination more suited to the season.

The tungsten lights used for the film were all on dimmers and were

generally dialed down to about 2800 to 2600 degrees Kelvin for added warmth. While shooting night interiors, Rinzler frequently employed Chinese lanterns "because they're soft, quick and can be warmed by dimming and draped to give direction [to the light]."

Several key early scenes in *Pollock* are set in the small bedroom of the tiny, drab Greenwich Village apartment that the artist shares with his brother, his sister-in-law and their baby. The warm, single-source, shadowy lighting style effectively mirrors the dark mental state of the troubled artist, who was still years away from the major recognition and success that he craved.

Pollock eventually strikes up a romance with another strong-willed artist, Lee Krasner (Marcia Gay Harden) — who first introduces herself by knocking on Pollock's apartment door, unannounced, to assess the competition. Later in their relationship, Krasner confronts the increasingly erratic Pollock about his behavior; conceding that life with him is difficult, she tells him that



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she still believes in his work and is willing to stay — but only if they get married. The scene, set in the couple's bedroom, is lit from a window behind and to the side of them. The radical sidelight is a few stops over key and highlights the part of Krasner's face that's closest to the befuddled, indecisive Pollock, who remains enveloped in warm, reddish shadows. According to Rinzler, this lighting scheme is "a prime example of the single-source lighting [we used so often in the film]."

Almost all of the film's action takes place in and around two very different homes that Pollock occupied during much of his adult life: the small, walk-up apartment (complete with a bathtub in the kitchen), and an old farmhouse with a barn/studio in bucolic East Hampton, Long Island. Exteriors of the Long Island home were filmed at the actual Pollock property, while the interiors were shot in a down-at-the-heels armory in Brooklyn, where four different versions of the Long Island rooms were created. These ranged from the abandoned, vermin-infested wreck that Pollock and Krasner initially occupied, to the expansive country home that the property later became.

The interiors of the barn/studio, where the artist developed his famous drip technique, were also shot on a set in the armory. The faux barn's siding was quite sparse in places, just as it appears to be in photographs of Pollock taken at the real studio. The filmmakers paid special attention to the lighting of this backdrop so that high-key daylight would convincingly break through the gaps in the siding. According to Rinzler, the transformation of the barn set into a chilly, wintertime painter's studio was achieved quite simply, by "frosting the windows and using 1/4 Blue gels on the tungsten cyclorama [backdrop] lights to cool them."

The cinematographer employed a Panaflex Millennium camera and the T1.9 Primo prime lenses. Because much of the film takes place in cramped quarters, she often used the 27mm and 35mm Primos, and occasionally the 21mm. The lenses were fitted throughout with 1/8 to 1/4 Black ProMist



Cinematographer Lisa Rinzler and director Ed Harris line up a shot on location on Long Island, N.Y.

filters. "The Primos are so sharp [that I used the ProMist] just to take the edge off," Rinzler explains. Scant color-correction filtration was used, including an occasional 81A and 85B to warm cooler exteriors.

Rinzler chose Kodak Vision 200T stock to add coolness to winter exteriors, which had to be shot in the late spring. She switched to EXR 5248 for spring and summer exteriors. "I think the 200T is less warm than the 5248, which has a more 'luscious' look," she notes. To help the spring shoot look like winter, the filmmakers also employed snow-making machines while "avoiding trees and looking for overcast skies."

While prime lenses were the rule, there are two notable zoom shots, for which Rinzler used the short Primo zoom. One is a so-called Zolly, in which the camera dollies back while the lens zooms in; this technique was used to create a disorienting effect for a scene in which Pollock, alone in his verdant Long Island surroundings, reads an emotionally charged letter from a family member. The other zoom occurs in a film-within-the-film that represents famous footage of Pollock at work, shot by photographer/filmmaker Hans Namuth.

To approximate the look of the Namuth film, Rinzler shot 16mm footage with an Aaton camera. Savvy viewers might notice, however, that the actor playing Namuth is shooting the zoom of Pollock with a Bolex camera fitted with a turret of prime lenses. "Sometimes you have to take a little license!" Rinzler quips. ■

Eric Rudolph can be reached via e-mail at erudolph2@nyc.rr.com.

Books in Review

by Ray Zone

Stroheim

by Arthur Lennig
University Press of Kentucky
514 pp., hardbound, \$30
ISBN 0-8131-2138-8

Few filmmakers have been as cloaked in myth as Erich von Stroheim (1885-1957), one of cinema's most rebellious auteurs. He was an idiosyncratic genius, arrogant and colorful, and while his self-invention provided a livelihood, it also became a trap that eventually proved to be his undoing.

Arthur Lennig has given a great gift to film fans with this monumental biography and critical analysis of von Stroheim's work. Lennig, an avid devotee of cinema, also wrote the definitive biography of Bela Lugosi (*The Count*, Putnam, 1974). Twenty years in the writing, *Stroheim* will clear away the apocrypha and myths that have obscured the great director's career, and help to place the focus on his films.

Von Stroheim always said he was derived from Austrian nobility, but he was actually the son of a hat merchant, and both of his parents were Jewish. When he arrived in America on November 26, 1909, his self-invention as an aristocrat, a high-ranking army officer and a Catholic began. After he spent a few years struggling at various occupations, von Stroheim began to act in films around 1915. He was also writing unproduced film scenarios. The portrayal of villainous Huns became his specialty, and he finally won a leading role as a heavy in Universal's 1919 film *The Heart of Humanity*. His trademark monocle and military plumage were in evidence, and his persona as the "man you loved to hate" was taking shape. (In the film, von Stroheim's character hurls a baby out a window during the course

of an attempted rape.)

The success of *The Heart of Humanity* prompted von Stroheim to approach Carl Laemmle with a proposal to write and direct a film that was subsequently released as *Blind Husbands* (1919). Von Stroheim's directorial work had clear personal overtones and can be divided into two main subjects: aristocratic life (*Merry-Go-Round*, *The Merry Widow*, *The Wedding March*) and proletarian life (*Greed*).

In *Blind Husbands*, von Stroheim plays the lustful and cowardly Austrian Lieutenant Erich von Steuben, who attempts to lure a married woman into adultery. The film was a financial success and led Universal to commission another work from von Stroheim: the now-lost film *The Devil's Pass Key* (1920). It was with *Foolish Wives* (1922) that the filmmaker's extravagance became obvious; immense sets were built in order to recreate Monte Carlo on Universal's backlot. Von Stroheim began shooting the epic in July 1920, and he continued until the cameras were taken away from him in June 1921. By the time shooting finally finished, 320 reels of negative had been produced; at that time, Universal films rarely ran more than five or six reels.

Foolish Wives premiered on 14 reels at 220 minutes, and von Stroheim complained after the premiere that it had been butchered. The New York Censorship Commission then ordered numerous cuts. In March 1922, the film went into general release in the United States on 10 reels. In 1972, Lennig reconstructed *Foolish Wives* at the request of the American Film Institute; the reconstructed version comprises 11 reels.

Lennig's defense of von Stroheim's work on *Foolish Wives* applies to the director's other films as well: "His

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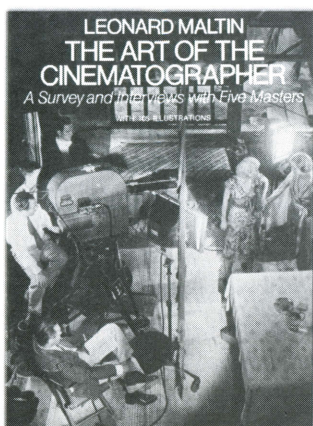
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use of irony, contrast, complex characterization and thematic richness triumphs far beyond the puerile simplicities of other American films of the period." Like D.W. Griffith, the era's other reigning master of the grand epic film, von Stroheim was interested in the complexity of the truth.

Lennig accurately characterizes the production of every von Stroheim film as "a nightmare," but he writes that he finds *Merry-Go-Round* (1923) "particularly difficult to discuss ... because of its confused authorship." After von Stroheim had shot 200,000 feet of film over 13 months, Universal production chief Irving Thalberg yanked him off the project and replaced him with mediocre talent Rupert Julian. Von Stroheim had no acting role in the film, so he had little leverage with Thalberg. The version of *Merry-Go-Round* released in 1923 includes only about 600 feet of von Stroheim's original footage.

"The firing of von Stroheim was a significant step in the motion picture industry," writes Lennig. After that, "the director was an employee, not the boss."

Von Stroheim's difficulties with Thalberg again came into play during the production of *Greed* (1924) for MGM. This mammoth adaptation of the novel *McTeague* by Frank Norris took six months to film. William Daniels, ASC was the cinematographer on every von Stroheim film from *Blind Husbands* to *The Merry Widow*. He said of *Greed*, "Much of it was very hard going. We were six weeks in Death Valley during the summer, July and August. It was 132 degrees under the shade of an umbrella."

Von Stroheim cut *Greed* down to a 24-reel version that ran eight hours, but it was released in 10 reels. Thalberg destroyed the original negative for most of the film. The eight-hour version of the film might have been von Stroheim's masterpiece and one of cinema's glories. To his own detriment, he could never cut one of his films down to less than four hours.

By 1929, von Stroheim was finished as a director and was acting in films such as *The Great Gabbo* (1929)

and *The Lost Squadron* (1932), playing off his onscreen persona. He continued to act for a living for the rest of his life, and he always attempted to expand his roles or create additional actions for his character. He had memorable roles in *Grand Illusion* (1937), *Five Graves to Cairo* (1943) and *Sunset Boulevard* (1950). He said that he found returning to Hollywood and portraying the role of Max Mayerling, the "goddamned butler" in *Sunset Boulevard*, particularly humiliating, maintaining that director Billy Wilder refused to incorporate many of his suggestions for the character.

Von Stroheim's uniquely sophisticated and twisted films continue to intrigue today's audiences with their obsessive attention to detail and character. "[He] was more than a grimy realist or a fabricator of continental sin who doggedly recorded miles upon miles of footage," writes Lennig. "Unlike Griffith, whose career faltered in the 1920s because he was repeating himself and not making full use of the cinematic language he had developed, von Stroheim was growing. That his potential was never allowed to develop fully is an almost unspeakable tragedy."

70mm Book Available

The March '00 issue of *AC* featured a review of *Film Presentation for the 21st Century: 70mm Super Definition Cinema*, a collection of essays that was published in the Netherlands, and we subsequently received several phone calls from readers who couldn't find it for sale. We recently learned that the book is available domestically by mail order for \$15 (which includes shipping) through International 70mm Publishers, P.O. Box 65611, Los Angeles, California, 90065. It is also available in Europe through International 70mm Publishers, Katwoudehof 36, 6843 BX Arnhem, The Netherlands, fax 011-31-263-815-950, e-mail: int70mm@dds.nl. *AC* is grateful to the book's publishers and contributing authors, Johan C.M. Wolthuis and Paul H. Rayton, for sharing this information. ■

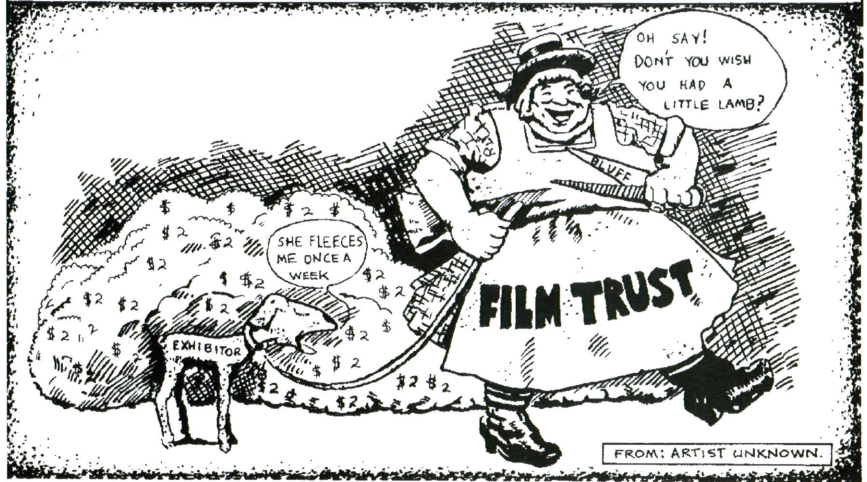
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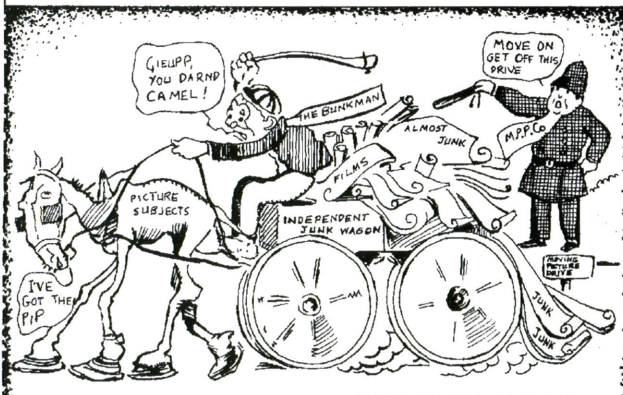


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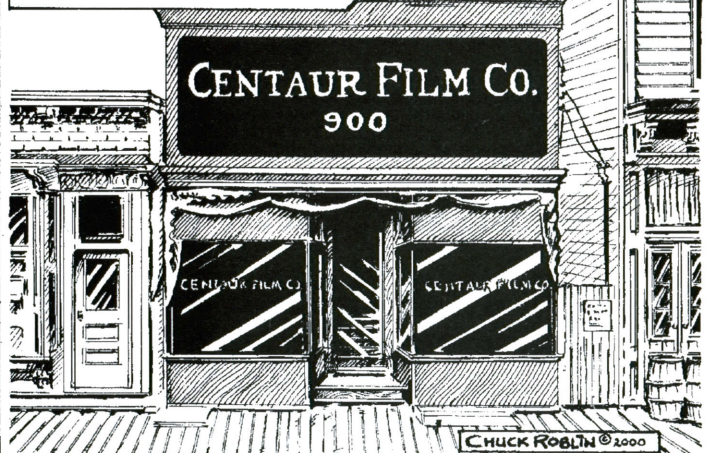
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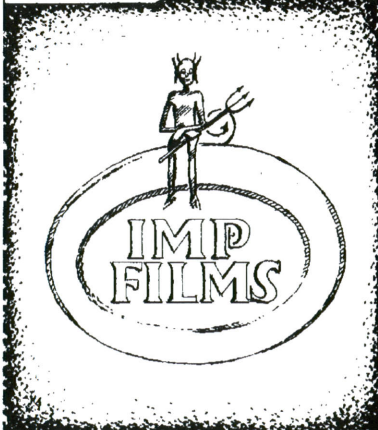
MOVING THE "JUNKMAN" ALONG.

THIS 1907 FILM COMPANY IN NEW JERSEY WAS THE FIRST INDEPENDENT IN THE INDUSTRY. ITS OWNER DAVID HORSLEY LATER JOINED FORCES WITH CARL LAEMMLE.



CHUCK ROBLIN © 2000

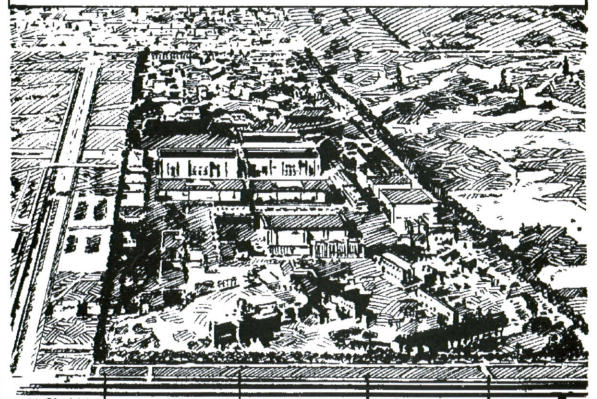
IN 1909, LAEMMLE FORMED THE INDEPENDENT MOVING PICTURES COMPANY (IMP) TO PRODUCE HIS OWN MOVIES.



BY 1912, IMP AND THE OTHER INDEPENDENTS WERE PRODUCING 50 PERCENT OF ALL MOVIES IN RELEASE.



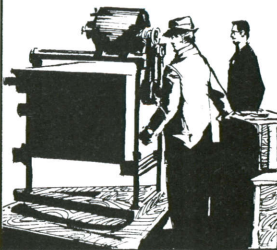
LAEMMLE OPENED UNIVERSAL STUDIOS IN HOLLYWOOD IN 1915.



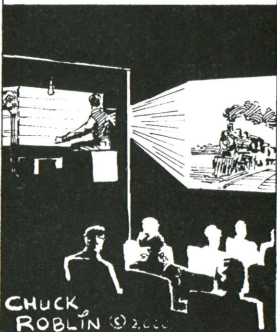
MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE, CARL LAEMMLE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR STOPPING EDISON'S PATENT "TRUST."

Next Month

**BILLY BITZER BEGINS
FILMING FOR BIOGRAPH
IN 1895**



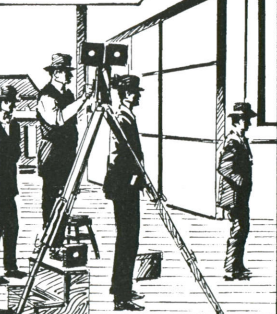
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TO WORK WITH D.W.
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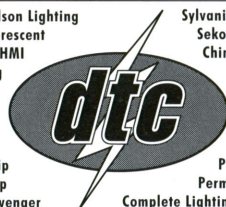
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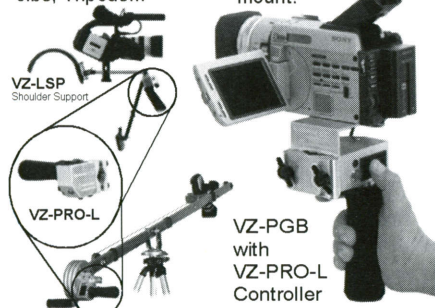
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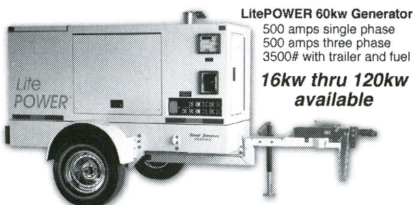
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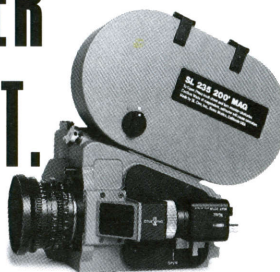


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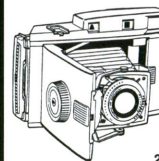
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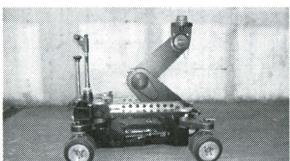
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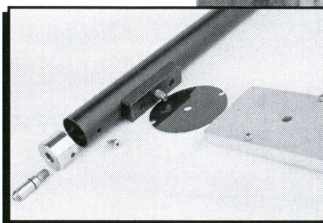
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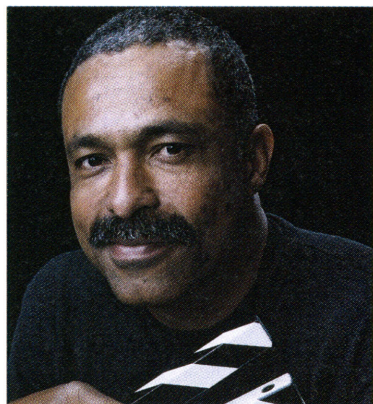
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From the Clubhouse

New ASC Members

The ASC has welcomed Donald A. Morgan and Mark Vargo into its membership.

Donald A. Morgan studied the printing process of color separation in transparencies in the early 1970s and graduated with an associate's degree in graphic arts from Los Angeles Community College. He started out in the mail-



room at Metromedia, where George and Tommy Schamp mentored him. When Tommy Schamp moved over to Universal, he asked Morgan to join him. Morgan has since enjoyed a stellar career in television as a lighting director.

Morgan's ability to integrate cinematic techniques into a multi-camera environment was a key to his success. Early in his career, while working as a lighting director for the hit comedy series *The Jeffersons* and *Good Times*, he studied black-and-white movies of the 1930s and '40s. The style of those films in keeping the light off the walls was a major influence on him, and he strove to bring that type of depth to television.

During the early Nineties, he recognized that mostly awards shows and one-camera film programs were using jib cameras and Steadicam. "I wanted to expand the visual aspects of the storytelling by using these tools and doing it cleanly, like on the show *Home*

Improvement, which I was with for eight years," he notes.

His work on the top-rated comedy series *Home Improvement* earned him seven Emmy Awards for outstanding lighting direction for a nighttime series. He also earned an Emmy for the pilot of *Mr. Belvedere* in 1984.

He received Emmy honors for contributing to the Emmy Award-winning achievement for outstanding technical direction/electronic camera work and video control for the 1984 series *Benson* and the 1985 pilot for *The Golden Girls*. In 1992, he was nominated for a daytime series Emmy for *Saved by the Bell*.

His shelves are crowded with scores of other awards from American Black Entertainment Television, Eastman Kodak and Friends of the Black Emmys.

Some of Morgan's numerous TV series credits in the Nineties included *Baghdad Café*, *South Central*, *Oh Baby*, the pilots for *Holding the Baby*, *Linc's*, *Those Who Can't* and *My Wife & Kids*, and the series *Grown-Ups*, *Girlfriends* and *Daddyo*.

After graduating from Montana State University in 1977 with a degree in motion-picture production, **Mark Vargo** worked in the optical department at Alpha Cine Lab in Seattle. Two years later, he was hired by Industrial Light & Magic as an optical cameraman for *The Empire Strikes Back*. During his stay at ILM, he composited numerous effects shots on films such as *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Dragonslayer*, *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*, *Poltergeist* and *Return of the Jedi*.

When Richard Edlund, ASC left ILM to form his own effects company, Boss Film Corporation, in 1983, Vargo was hired as optical-effects supervisor and worked on the Academy Award-nominated *Ghostbusters*, as well as *2010* and *The Boy Who Could Fly*. His career progressed, and he eventually

became a visual-effects supervisor with credits such as *Turbulence*, *Outbreak* and *Flight of the Intruder*.

On *Flight of the Intruder*, as well as *Ghostbusters II* and *Waterworld*, Vargo tested his technical and aesthetic know-how by becoming the director of effects photography. Continuing along the cinematographer's path, he racked up numerous credits as a second-unit



director of photography. With the TV pilot *Glory, Glory*, Vargo made the jump up to first-unit cinematography. As a first-unit director of photography, he has since shot *Another Day in Paradise*, *Play It to the Bone* and *Fighting Like Cats and Dogs*. ■

Some Oscar fact-fixing...

In the December '00 Clubhouse News, it was mentioned that Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC had won three Academy Awards and ASC fellows Joe Ruttenberg and Harry Stradling are the only cinematographers to have won four. Actually, it was Ruttenberg and Leon Shamroy, ASC, not Stradling, who won four Oscars. Stradling is right behind Storaro with two Academy Awards.

WRAP SHOT



FBI Agent Jack Crawford (Dennis Farina, center) convinces retired agent and ace profiler Will Graham (William Petersen, left) to return to work to help catch a serial killer known as "The Tooth Fairy" in Michael Mann's *Manhunter*.

Movies about serial killers have become mainstream, and the man most responsible for the genre's current formula is author Thomas Harris, whose novel *The Silence of the Lambs* was adapted into a hit film in 1991. The dark thriller won five Academy Awards, including Best Picture, and Anthony Hopkins's portrayal of the cannibalistic psychiatrist Hannibal Lecter is now etched into popular culture as one of our most frightening human monsters.

Harris, a former journalist, first visited the genre with his debut novel, *Red Dragon*, which was published in 1981 and introduced Lecter as a peripheral character. The book formulated some new conventions for the serial-killer genre by featuring two murderers and a troubled police renegade working in a tenuous alliance with a killer. A feature-film adaptation of *Red Dragon*, titled *Manhunter*, was subsequently written and directed by promising filmmaker Michael Mann. It was released theatrically to minor notice in 1986 but has since achieved cult status.

One of the film's assets is a chilling portrayal of Lecter by Brian Cox. However, the story's main focus is Will

Graham (William Petersen), a retired FBI agent who is shamed into returning to work by his former boss, Jack Crawford (Dennis Farina). Crawford orders Graham to track down a serial killer dubbed "The Tooth Fairy," whose moniker reflects his unseemly habit of biting his victims. We learn that Graham previously helped to capture Lecter, but was almost disemboweled in the process and suffered a nervous breakdown. Despite his mentally fragile state, Graham agrees to return to work.

One convention of the serial-killer genre dictates that there be a psychic similarity, or doubling, between the hero and the villain. To "recover the mindset" of the killer, Graham visits Lecter in prison, where the wily psychiatrist works his way into the agent's psyche in an unsettling fashion. Though *Manhunter*, like all of Harris's works, falls within the genre of police procedural fiction by making high-tech use of modern science to capture criminals, it is this intuitive and psychic bond that ultimately leads the protagonist to the killer. "Do you know why you caught me, Will?" Lecter asks Graham. "The reason... is we're just alike. Smell yourself."

The Tooth Fairy is actually a photo-technician named Francis Dolarhyde (Tom Noonan), and photography, home movies and the importance of the visual experience play an integral part in the story; one of the essential clues is a fingerprint lifted from a victim's cornea.

Manhunter was produced by Dino De Laurentiis, who was eager to stay away from "mainstream" filmmakers at his new North Carolina production facility. He therefore brought a young Dante Spinotti, ASC, AIC over from Italy to photograph the film. Thus began a fruitful collaboration between Mann and Spinotti that would continue to evolve in *Heat* (1995) and *The Insider* (1999). The meticulous Mann knew exactly how he wanted to film *Manhunter*, and extensive pre-rigging and pre-lighting was done prior to shooting. The cinematography runs a stylistic gamut, including scenes drenched with blue light; the harsh, flat white lighting of Lecter's cell; and nighttime exteriors lit only by a car's headlights. For one fast-paced scene, Spinotti and Mann shot from the trunk of a car with two cameras as the car made sharp turns on the road in the middle of the night.

To research his novels, Harris visited FBI headquarters in Quantico, Virginia, in the 1980s, and toured its state-of-the-art forensics lab. Retired FBI agent and author Robert Ressler, who claims to have coined the phrase "serial killer," gave Harris two tours of the Behavioral Science Unit (BSU), where the FBI's psychological profiling of criminals takes place.

The formula launched by Harris has had a considerable influence upon various media since the financial and critical success of *The Silence of the Lambs*. On television, this influence is evident in programs such as *Profiler* and *The X-Files*. More than ever, it seems, our monsters have human faces.

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